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SIZZLING
SUNNY
LEONE
slams
her critics

SEXY!
JOHN ABRAHAM
on fitness and the fabulous 40s

Anushka-Virat
split!

QUEEN'S
SPEECH
Deepika
Padukone

Superstar
Express
Amitabh
Bachchan



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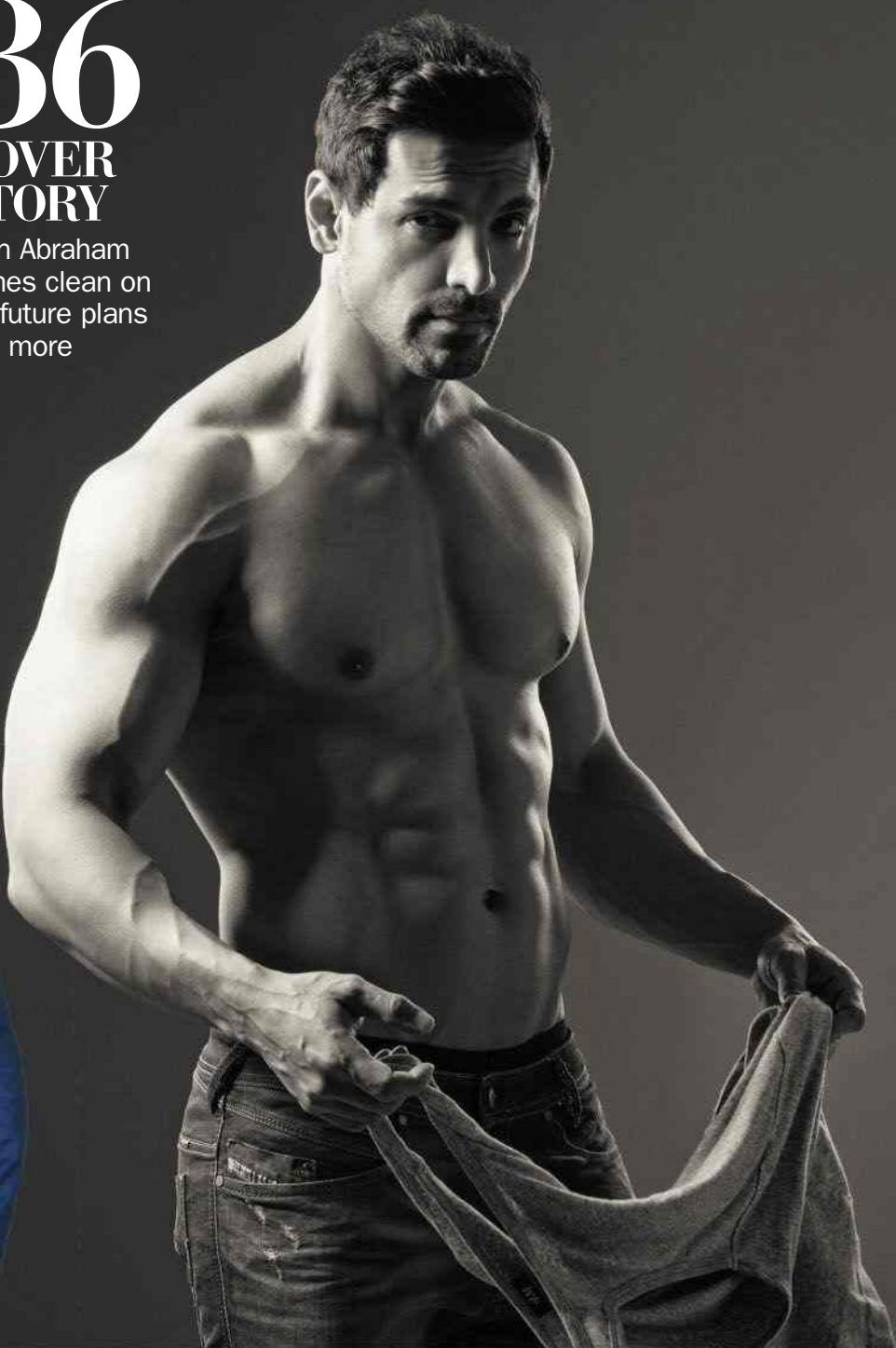
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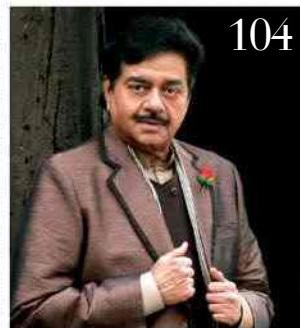


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Letter from the Editor

Johnny Handsome

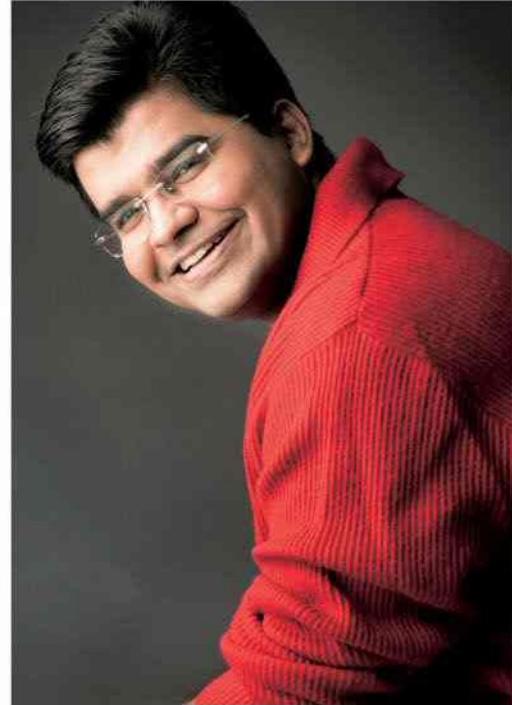
John Abraham is on our cover this time and boy, doesn't he look dishy? When John first burst on to the screen with *Jism* (2003), people dismissed him as another himbo at best, a model type all set to be part of the furniture at worst. He was a rank outsider with no sugar daddy to call the shots for him at a time when industry kids were falling from the skies like July rains. A huge bias against models, both within the industry and public perception didn't help either. What he had was a desire to make it big — he was a rank outsider to the modelling world too but the MBA grad made it big there through sheer grit. He also had an emotional anchor in the form of then girlfriend Bipasha Basu, who supported him all the way.

His big break came with *Dhoom* (2004), where his antics as the bike riding uber cool villain got him noticed by the masses. His anti-hero roles in *Zinda* (2006) and *Taxi No 9211* (2006) were much loved. The year 2006 can be said to be the watershed year for him, as it got him his most dramatic role yet — playing a hard-core journalist in Kabir Khan's hard hitting *Kabul Express*. In 2008, he changed tracks and acted alongside Abhishek Bachchan and Priyanka Chopra in the raunchy comedy *Dostana*, where Abhishek and he pretended to be a gay couple. *Desi Boyz* (2011) and *Housefull* (2012), further enhanced his comic credentials.

He started venturing out as a producer at this point, coming out with the hugely successful *Vicky Donor* (2012), directed by Shoojit Sircar and launching Ayushmann Khurrana's career. *Madras Cafe* (2013), his next collaboration with Sircar, wasn't commercially successful but won critical acclaim.

He also has a clothing line, a stake in a football team and is known for his love for power bikes. There are talks he might soon own a super bike franchise as well. In 2014, the actor got married to Priya Runchal, a US based investment banker he had been seeing since 2010. There were reports there was a rift in the relationship, though he has denied them strongly.

The handsome hunk is coming out with another action thriller, *Rocky Handsome* and there are films like *Hera Pheri 3* and *Force 2* on the cards as well. A couple of productions like *Satra Ko Shaadi Hai* and *Agra Ka Daabra* are on the cards as well. Looks like he's all set for a rocking 2016...



A magazine spread featuring John Abraham. The top half of the page is a large photograph of him shirtless, holding a white cup, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Below this, the headline 'LET'S GET PHYSICAL' is written in bold, white, sans-serif capital letters. The bottom half of the page contains two columns of text, which is an interview transcript. The text is in a smaller, black font.

A magazine spread featuring John Abraham. The top half of the page is a large photograph of him shirtless, flexing his abdominal muscles. He is looking down at his torso. Below this, the same interview transcript from the previous spread continues. The text is in a smaller, black font.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jitesh Pillaai". The signature is fluid and expressive, with varying line thicknesses.

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a bird's-eye view of show town's happenings

masalla fix

BIRTHDAY BUMPS



Farah Khan, Sushant Singh Rajput and Mukesh Chhabra had a blast at Sushant Singh's party. Looks like they are the new besties in town. A riveting combination for sure.

Anushka-Virat split pg 7

Sohail Khan's marriage woes pg 9

Kangana Ranaut helps Vishal Bhardwaj pg 10

PHOTOGRAPHS: VIRAL BHAYANI, YOGEN SHAH

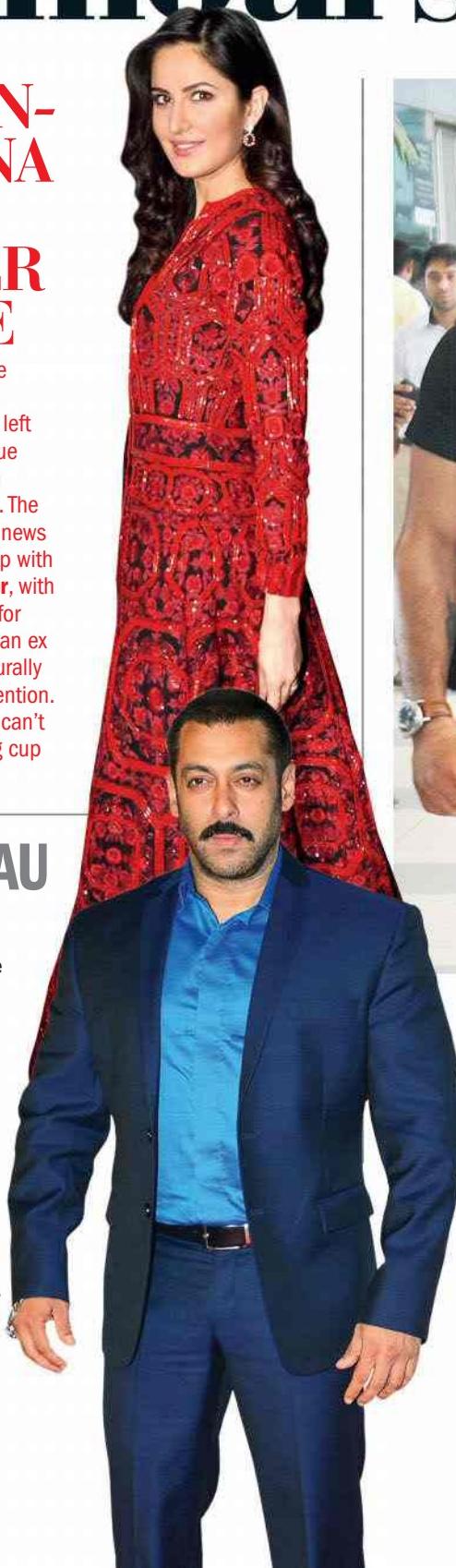
Rumours & More

SALMAN-KATRINA CATCH UP OVER COFFEE

Apparently, after a police award function, **Salman Khan** and **Katrina Kaif**, left separately from the venue only to meet again hush hush for a cup of coffee. The actress has been in the news for her reported break-up with boyfriend **Ranbir Kapoor**, with whom she was living in for over a year. So meeting an ex for whatever reason naturally would attract undue attention. But there's nothing that can't be solved over a healing cup of coffee. What say?

LOYAL BEAU SALMAN

Salman Khan's farmhouse bashes are events, which B-town denizens never ever miss. At a recent do, reveals an insider, one of the starlets was trying to get over friendly with the superstar. That was not surprising but Salman's reaction definitely was. He immediately pulled his alleged girlfriend, Russian actress **Lulia Vantur** by his side and introduced her to the girl saying, "Have you met my girlfriend, Lulia?" Surely, the ambitious young actress got the message straight.



END OF INNINGS FOR ANUSHKA-VIRAT?

It came as a shock when we heard the news about the oh-so-perfect couple **Anushka Sharma** and **Virat Kohli** going their separate ways. Reportedly, the two have even stopped following each other on social media. And, if we are to believe insiders, it seems the cricketer didn't even answer Anushka's calls after he decided to end their relationship. Not long ago, the couple that was much in love, travelled across continents to be with each other. Anushka was seen at many of Virat's matches while the hotshot player accompanied the actress during her shooting schedules. We wish all ends well for the two.



THEY'VE GOT THE GROOVE: Atul Kulkarni, Ganesh Acharya, Aamir Khan, Sharman Joshi and Siddharth grooved to the *Masti ki paathshaala* song together at the 10th anniversary commemoration of *Rang De Basanti*. Needless to say the crowd went wild. Cool!

SUSHANT CALLS IT QUILTS

We hear that **Sushant Singh Rajput** has given up smoking. He's become health conscious and wants to do justice to his work. Presently, he's shooting for *Dhoni - The Untold Story* too, which calls for much physical exertion. The actor has also restricted his partying and makes sure he doesn't tire himself unnecessarily. He leaves any party well in time so that he can go to bed and wake up early. We support this change Sushant!



HRITHIK-SUSSANNE SUPER PARENTS

Nope, **Sussanne Khan** hasn't taken off to Dubai as some insisted. She was just holidaying with her family there. Those in the know swear that she's a wonderful parent to her boys **Hrehaan** and **Hridhan**. As is **Hrithik Roshan**, who's happy babysitting the kids of his friends too. More so now, when he's home recuperating post a ligament tear he suffered on the set of *Mohenjo Daro*. While the separation hasn't been easy it's heartwarming to see the ex-partners work things out as smoothly as possible for the kids. Three cheers to that!



Best buddies

Sooraj Pancholi and **Athiya Shetty**, the romantic pair in **Salman Khan's** *Hero*, are quite a twosome even though they always seem to be at loggerheads. They are often seen squabbling like school kids and at times the two are not even on talking terms. But an insider reveals that the blow-hot-blown-cold relationship is only on the surface. Deep down, the two are great buddies and share a great bond.



DARSHAN KUMAR TO FIT INTO BIG B'S SHOES?



Apparently, the makers of *Sarabjit* had approached **Amitabh Bachchan** to play Sarabjit's lawyer in the film. **Sarabjit Singh**, a farmer from Bhikhwind in Punjab, languished in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail in Pakistan for 22 years and passed away on May 2, 2013. **Randeep Hooda** plays Sarabjit while **Aishwarya Rai Bachchan** plays his sister who fought to bring him back. Now that, Big B isn't playing the lawyer, the makers have signed **Darshan Kumar** to portray the character.



DAUGHTER DEAREST: Imran Khan is a dapper lad and makes sure daughter **Imara** is dressed to the nines too, whatever the occasion. We just can't take our eyes off the cutie pie...

Technology to the rescue

So this actress made a comeback of sorts recently and was praised hugely for how stunning she looked in the recently released film. But it seems making her look good on screen has come with a hefty price. The director of the film was overheard saying, "What about the crores I spent on photoshop and liquefying her body?" Erm...

Khan-daan in trouble?

There's been talk of brewing dissent in the Khan household. Rumour mongers insist that **Sohail Khan's** marriage with **Seema Khan** has hit a rough patch. And that Seema has reportedly shown him the door because of his alleged involvement with a young starling. Not sure if it's true false or in between but we wish the couple peace and happiness.





LAUGH LINES: Tiger Shroff and Shraddha Kapoor seem to have hit it off during the shooting of *Baaghi*. The duo was caught chit-chatting recently in the Mehboob Studio environs and the camaraderie was palpable.

ADITYA-KRITI BOND

Both are single and ready to mingle. **Aditya Roy Kapoor**, as insiders say, has split with longtime girlfriend **Shraddha Kapoor**. And **Kriti Sanon**, who was apparently dating model-turned-actor **Gaurav Arora** (he will debut in **Vikram Bhatt's** *Love Games*) has also moved on. So when Aditya and Kriti met at **Hrithik Roshan's** 42nd birthday party, the two youngsters bonded big time and seemed comfortable with each other. Not only that, Kriti was also seen making a beeline for hotshot directors **Karan Johar**, **Kabir Khan** and **Imtiaz Ali**. The *Dilwale* girl surely knows the importance of networking.



KANGANA'S TIPS TO VISHAL

Kangana Ranaut seems to know a thing or two about filmmaking, it seems. We'd, of course, heard that she asked for screenplay credits in movies. But this one takes the cake. Insiders on the sets of *Rangoon* inform us that she was seen giving suggestions to **Vishal Bharadwaj** on how to get the lighting right. After all those filmmaking courses she has attended overseas, she seems to have gained an understanding of the technicalities. Apparently, it didn't go down too well with the ace director. Reportedly, there was stress on the sets. However, things settled down soon.



Tahira calls the shots

Ayushmann Khurrana's wife **Tahira Kashyap** has started a newfound interest in her husband's career. Recently, she worked on the concept for his music video and now we hear that Tahira has started sitting for Ayushmann's script narrations. And she even puts across her point of view. Recently, a director was surprised to witness Tahira's keen involvement through the narration. Well, that's creative partnership for sure.



HORSING AROUND: Best buds Ranveer Singh and Arjun Kapoor literally let their hair down and took 'high spirits' to a new level at Asin's reception. That's what friendship is all about, right?

Sooraj aims for the stars

Apparently, Sooraj Pancholi was supposed to do **Anubhav Sinha's** *Turn Bin 2* but he was dropped later. Reportedly, he was keen to be paired opposite an A-list actress. We're told Sooraj had several meetings with director **Anubhav Sinha** and producer **Bhushan Kumar**. All was going according to plan till the time he put forth this condition. The miffed filmmakers decided to drop him instead. Tch tch...



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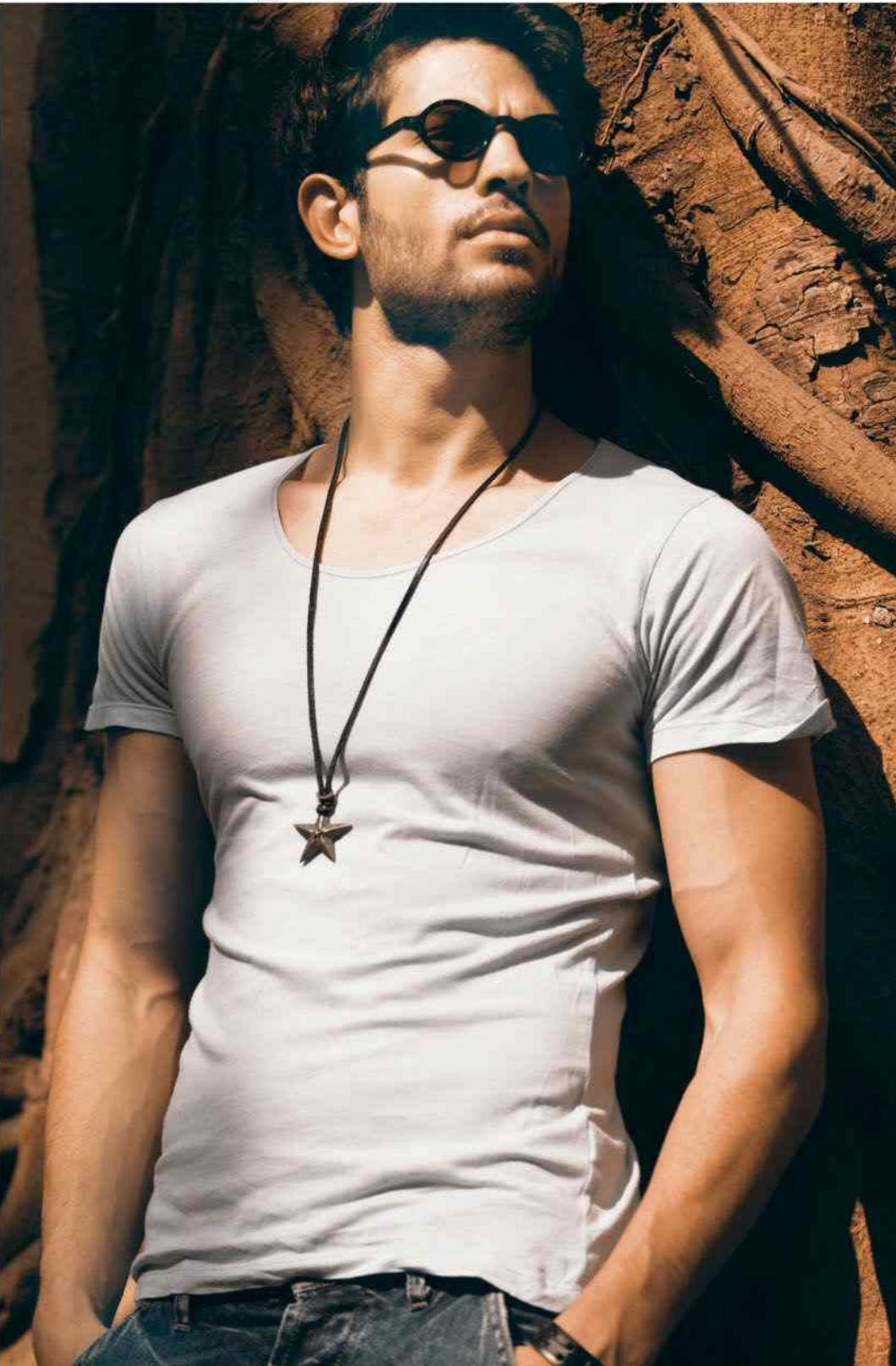
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movies on the block, set-talk, talent-buzz,
hotties to watch out for

preview



Krishna Chaturvedi

EDGE OF GLORY

Call it a case of luck by chance, Mathura boy Krishna Chaturvedi bagged his debut film *Ishq Forever* when producer Shabbir Boxwala spotted the ruggedly handsome lad on Facebook. Back in the day he was a Commerce graduate in Delhi. But the lure of the limelight pulled him towards Mumbai shores. It was here that he became a top model on the ramp and also a regular in fashion magazine spreads. The newcomer takes a leaf out of his idol Akshay Kumar's book by training in mixed martial arts. He's not into pumping iron. You'd rather catch him riding a bike or enjoying adventure sports.



Exclusive stills from
Rocky Handsome pg 14

Harshvardhan Rane makes a shift from South to North pg 16



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Life's a beach: John Abraham with Shruti Haasan



ROCKY HANDSOME

Release Date:

March 25, 2016

Banner:

J.A. Entertainment and
Azure Entertainment

Producer:

John Abraham and
Sunir Kheterpal

Director:

Nishikant Kamat

Music:

Sunny and Inder Bawra,
Ankit Tiwari, Bombay Rockers

Cast:

John Abraham, Diya Chalwad,
Shruti Haasan



Rain man: John



At gun-point: John

The Plot

Rocky Handsome is an official remake of South Korea's highest grossing 2010 movie, *The Man From Nowhere*. Directed by Nishikant Kamat, it's as much about kicks and punches as it's about heart-wrenching emotions.

A seven-year-old girl (Diya Chalwad) is the catalyst for the one-man army Kabir Ahlawat aka Rocky (John Abraham) going into an overdrive. The journey of an unforgiving man on a lethal rampage, when the only person he cares about is taken away from him.



The final walk: John

North by SOUTHWEST

Debutant **Harshvardhan Rane** talks about doing Hindi films after a successful career down South. **Aakriti Anand** is all ears

There's a cool, calm and amicable air about Harshvardhan Rane. He chooses to describe himself as 'honest, basic and a wolf/caveman'. And it's probably these traits that he brought to his character Inder in his debut film, Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru's *Sanam Teri Kasam*. But the inspiration for the character goes a little deeper. "I won't take too much of the credit because I brought in a lot from my father... just the natural raw warmth in him was so magical. As kids, my sister and I used to look up to him as our hero."

Yet it took a lot more for the actor to play a drunk in *Sanam Teri Kasam*. Apart from drawing his influences from notable actor Sir Michael Caine, he says, "I saw a lot of videos of actors who tell you that a drunk doesn't have to lose balance, he can control himself, so that it looks more natural."

This was his first Hindi feature film but it surely wasn't the first time he faced the camera. Having started off his

career working on the second season of the hit television show, *Left Right Left*, which dealt with the lives of army cadets, his motive to do that was to follow in Shah Rukh Khan's footsteps. "He learned acting from Barry John, so I also studied acting at the Barry John School. *Phir unhone Fauji serial kiya*. *Left Right Left* was a similar genre so I just gave it a go."

But fate had other plans for Harshvardhan and he made his way into Telugu films, making his debut in the 2010 multistarrer, *Thakita Thakita*. Though the film had three other heroes besides him, just the idea of being on the big screen was enough reason for him to make the leap. The drive to excel as an actor has only increased since. He adds that the

jitters are greater, six years down the line. "It was all excitement and happiness then but now it's more serious. *Ab jitters thode zyaada hain*. There's pressure to do better work." Being an outsider to the industry doesn't deter him. "I choose not to acknowledge people who discourage me saying, 'What makes you believe it will happen considering so many aspirants come to Mumbai everyday?' In contrast, there are a lot of people who encourage me."

His next, *Satra Ko Shaadi Hai*, which also stars Barun Sobti and has been produced by John Abraham and UTV, reinstates the belief. But when you ask him what's next, he jokes, "Lunch!"

For someone who ran away away from home at the age of 16, moved to Delhi and worked in an STD booth, then a cyber café and a call centre... even selling repurposed furniture when in Hyderabad, he says, "I've never planned my life. But I have a strong faith in myself. I believe if I keep going stronger than the previous day, I'll do something better today." ■

“For my role in Sanam Teri Kasam, I saw videos of actors, who tell you that a drunk doesn't have to lose balance. He can control himself so that it looks natural”



With Mawra Hocane in *Sanam Teri Kasam*



Pique & Cast

Casting director for *Bajirao Mastani* and *Jai Gangaajal*, **Shruti Mahajan**, tells **Bradley Fernandes** how she helps directors flesh out their dreams



Well, as they say, well begun is half the battle won, it all begins with singling out the right actor for the right character. A perfect cast is what every director dreams about and here's where the casting director, who conducts auditions and finally zooms in on the suitable actor for a particular role, plays an important role. He's or rather she's the one who gives flesh and form to a director's dream. Mind you, it's not an easy job. Young casting director, Shruti Mahajan's normal routine involves going through thousands of pictures, resumes and reels, narrowing down on options, preparing auditions and setting up meetings of actors with directors.

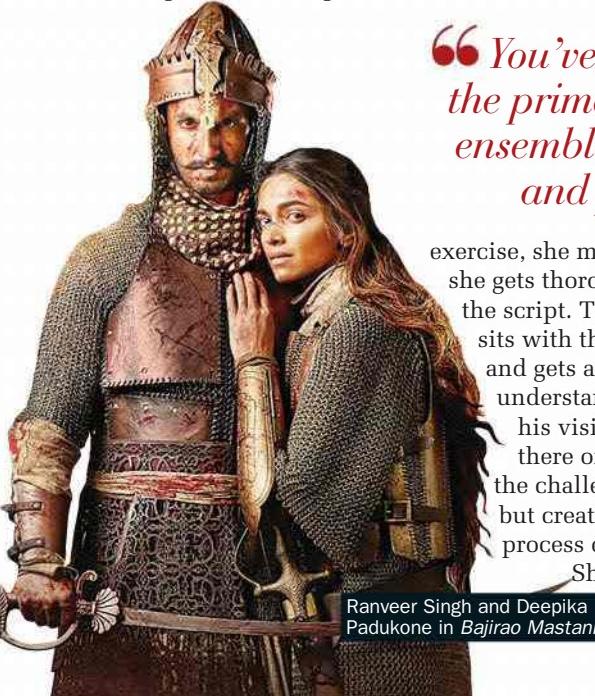
From the quiet bylanes of Jaipur, to the madness of Mumbai...it has been a magnum switch for Shruti. After completing her Masters in Business in HR, she earned a campus placement in a MNC. But a plump pay cheque and a cushy lifestyle could not



Priyanka Chopra in *Jai Gangaajal*

dull her fascination for showbiz. She landed a job of a casting assistant at Yash Raj Films. Gradually, she got her first break as an independent casting director with *Goliyon ki Rasleela – Ram-Leela* and *Chakravyuh* in 2013. “My life just changed overnight. I’m fortunate to have worked with the best visionaries of the film industry ever since.”

Last year *Bajirao Mastani* earned all the accolades for getting the cast bang on. Not only the three main leads – Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone and Priyanka Chopra - but all the characters suited the period epic. Shruti says it’s zeroing in on the small characters that demands the sharpest acumen. “You’ve got to be true not only to the primary cast but to the entire ensemble as it adds flavour, soul and purity to the film. Also, the ability to cast the actor from the audience’s point of view is an art.” Before she begins the casting



Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone in *Bajirao Mastani*

Shruti Mahajan's wish-list of Hindi actors for Hollywood remakes

| | |
|--|--|
|  BRIDE WARS |  Pretty Woman |
|  DEVIL WEARS PRADA |  KING'S SPEECH |
| <i>You've got to be true not only to the primary cast but to the entire ensemble as it adds flavour, soul and purity to the film</i> | |

“You've got to be true not only to the primary cast but to the entire ensemble as it adds flavour, soul and purity to the film”

exercise, she makes sure she gets thorough with the script. Then she sits with the director and gets a complete understanding of his vision. From there on begins the challenging but creative process of casting. She has

worked with the maverick Sanjay Leela Bhansali twice and claims its been an enriching experience for her. Says she, “For Mr Bhansali, filmmaking is an art. *Bajirao Mastani* being his dream project, he was extra particular about getting the characters right. Being a period film with a royal background,

the casting had to be precise. Mr Bhansali gives a freehand to his technicians and shows immense trust in them, which helps in making the right decisions. It’s been a great learning process.” Another project which is close to her heart is Prakash Jha’s *Jai Gangaajal*. The film revolves around a female police officer Abha Mathur (played by Priyanka Chopra). Director Prakash Jha, who also plays a part in the film, had several discussions with Shruti to get his ensemble right. “*Gangaajal* is already a brand and to live up to it was a challenge. Unlike the previous *Gangaajal*, this time we had a female protagonist. During our discussion the only actor whose name kept cropping up was Priyanka Chopra’s. Eventually, things worked out despite her busy schedule.” Even while casting Jha, there were a couple of look tests and auditions she set up to ensure he was suited for the role of the corrupt cop.

That she has made her presence felt as a casting director in the industry is evident. Forthcoming projects where she has played a decisive role include R Balki’s *Ki and Ka*, A R Murugadoss’ *Akira* and Milan Luthria’s *Badshao*. She doesn’t take success lightly but is positive about the impact this specialised talent will have on the business of films. “In the times to come, casting will become an indispensable part of film production. It’s currently at its evolving stage.” ■

F&B

fashion and beauty

They are hot, they are cool.

Meet our trend makers and breakers

WOWING THE WEST

PRIYANKA CHOPRA IN VERSACE

WHERE: AT ABC'S TCA TOUR

THE X FACTOR: EXPERIMENTAL AND EDGY

Priyanka Chopra is a fashion icon in B-town. And now, she's on a mission to conquer Hollywood, one garb at a time. This Versace avatar is testimony to that. The asymmetrical dress, featuring an interesting décolletage neckline, fits her like a glove. And the fuss-free fishtail lets the dress do all the talking. The bling comes in via the Christian Louboutin Debout Disco pumps and a subtle metallic clutch. What makes this fierce avatar a perfect 10 is her green eye make-up matching the slash on the neckline. Boy, she's working the hell out of that dress!

COMPILED BY: KINNARI RATHOD

PHOTOGRAPHS: VIRAL BHAYANI, YOGEN SHAH



Hottest clutches in B-town pg 21

Sonam Kapoor's nude dress pg 23

Best brows in the business pg 25



Happy hands

Classics take a backseat. These poppy purses are here to stay. Read on...

A clutch is no longer just a finishing touch to your outfit nor does it need to blend with it. Clutches have taken centre-stage in all forms... quirky, funky and slogan. You can play it sassy just like **Parineeti Chopra**, who's looking helluva hot yet asking us to 'Relax' or like **Bhumi Pednekar** give the message of 'Celebration'. Colour block like **Kareena Kapoor Khan** and **Esha Gupta** to quirk up your monotone outfit or let it garner all the attention like **Huma Qureshi**. So go ahead and invest in some fun clutches. They're a girl's best friend, after all.

Ruffle it up

*Our glam goddesses have
embraced a Victorian style
this season. Read on...*



DEEPIKA PADUKONE



JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ



MALAIIKA ARORA KHAN



SONAM KAPOOR

Romance played out big time in the form of ruffles and frills at the Spring 2016 Paris Fashion Week. Back here, ruffles are packing extra volume by being interpreted in many ways. On one hand, **Deepika Padukone** stands out in her edgy, futuristic ruffle extravaganza separates. On the other, **Jacqueline Fernandez** dons a one-of-a-kind overall-ruffle saree with a cross shoulder blouse thus nailing two trends in one go! And while **Sonam Kapoor** shows us the true blue romantic meaning of ruffles, **Malaika Arora Khan** ventures into the monochrome alley and pulls off the overall ruffle gown with enviable ease.



Oh My Love

OUR
PICKS



Elie Saab



Glamorous



Valentino



Rare



Go Nude

*Want to look sexy without major skin-show?
Worry not girls, Sonam Kapoor's got us covered...*

Jennifer Lopez, Beyoncé and Kim Kardashian have grabbed eyeballs (quite literally) in this so-called 'naked dress'. And it's taken the fashion world by storm overnight! It's sexy and alluring without extensive skin show courtesy its construction. At first glance it gives an illusion of being transparent where actually there's a nude lining underneath the fabric. Bringing the trend here in a subtler form is our very own stylista, **Sonam Kapoor**, who chose to prep it up with berry lips and nude pumps.

Choose the right colour, spruce up with accessories and keep the skin show in control.

Hey Hun!

Be fun and peppy this summer with this hair trend. Here's how...

Remember those half ponytails our moms styled for us as kids? Well, with a slight twist it's now reinvented into something super trendy. Giving the messy ponytails, top knots and braids competition this season is the hun – the half bun. The best part is that it works on any hair colour, texture and length. See how B-town cuties, **Alia Bhatt**, **Parineeti Chopra** and **Kriti Sanon** have already fallen for it. And before you think it's casual, check out **Malaika Arora Khan** taking it to the red carpet and slayin' it sleek. Gotcha!

6

STEPS TO THE HUN

- ◆ Back comb and ruffle it vigorously with fingertips to add texture to the hair
- ◆ Run your fingers from the top of your ears to the crown of your head to form a V
- ◆ Select the height you want
 - ◆ Finger comb it and tie the section in a ponytail
 - ◆ If you want it sleek then comb it and use hairspray
 - ◆ For a casual affair, messy is great. Only finger comb





SONAM KAPOOR

Brows on fleek

Celebrity make-up artist, Mallika Bhatt, tells us what's hot and what's not in the big brow world



DEEPIKA PADUKONE



PRIYANKA CHOPRA



KAJOL



ALIA BHATT



SHRADDAH KAPOOR



KANGANA RANAUT



KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN



ADITI RAO HYDARI

DOS AND DON'TS

- Comb out your brow and figure out the empty spaces that need to be filled
- Try matching your filler colour to your hair color
- Use a shade lighter than your actual brow colour for a natural look
- Fill in using the angel brow brush
- Use a brow mascara for finishing touches
- Most importantly, don't overdo it



Mallika Bhatt

Well groomed eyebrows are a must in the beauty world. Thick brows are the hot thing right now. And luckily, most of our divas are already gifted with thick brows. While some refrain from extensive threading and just pluck out a few out of place strands, some use fillers to enhance the shape and thickness. With the right use of brow fillers, powder and mascara it's easy to get the perfect thickness and shape – be it an arch or a round curve.

OUR PICKS

Brow pencil and brush from Riche-Le-Sourcil

Brow brush from MAC

Brow comb from MAC

Brow gel from MAC

Studio Eyebrow Kit

BROW KIT

CRISS-CROSS FUN

This fun cut-out and cross shoulder dress should have been jazzed up by accessories or a chic hair style.

FLOWER GIRL

The wild floral dress works wonders and the red lips add to the magic. But the chunky nude pumps are a downer. Killer colour-blocked stilettos would've been an interesting touch to this look.

PRETTY PRINCESS

The colour looks ah-mazing on Kat's porcelain skin, the nude lips and wavy locks are bang on too. But a minor gripe is the awkward length of the gown. It's one inch above the floor length, something difficult to ignore.

WHITE DELIGHT

The tantalising toned midriff and thigh high slit raises the mercury, the unusual orange pumps and golden accessories add to the hotness. Now only if the hair was pulled back in a sleek hairdo, this one would have been a winner.

BLACK HOT

A figure hugging black number, the right amount of peek-a-boo, minimal accessories, smokey eyes, a nude pout and glitter on her feet - this one is a winner for all the right reasons. Howzzat!



1/5



2/5



3/5



4/5



5/5

Kat on a hot tin roof

One diva, different attires... We pick five looks of Katrina Kaif from her recent array of stylish appearances and rate 'em on our style-o-meter



Velvet Touch

Our stars continue to strut around the velvet lounge this fortnight. You should too...

Guess our fashion fanatics haven't bid adieu to this fall trend just yet as velvet has been doing the round of tinsel town in all forms sexy and cool.

Sonam Kapoor kept it fierce and edgy in her mesh paneled black number and stunned 'em all. **Ranveer Singh** on the other hand, pulled off two velvet elements – a green blazer and turquoise pants with sneakers and a brown shirt in true blue RS style. Meanwhile, **Priyanka Chopra** looked like a sexy fairy in an ink blue paper waist gown and ox-blood pout. Phew, hotness!



OUR
PICKS

the good life

lifestyles of the fit and
the fabulous



WEAR YOUR ATTITUDE

“ I don't believe looking good is a task or that it requires huge effort. You can have fun with what you're wearing by adding your own quirk and touch. What's important is to believe that you're beautiful. Flaunt your feminineness. Confidence is the most important accessory. With that you can work every look ”

Sonam Kapoor on making a style statement

Lose it like Bhumi Pednekar pg 30

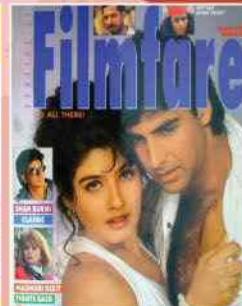
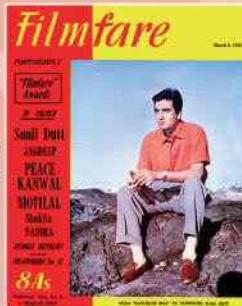
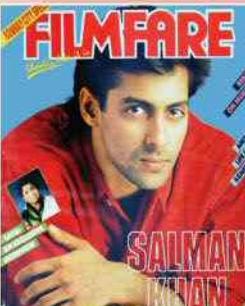
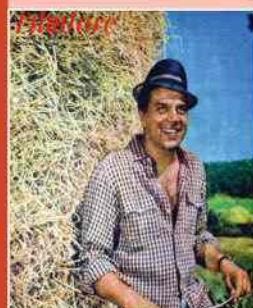
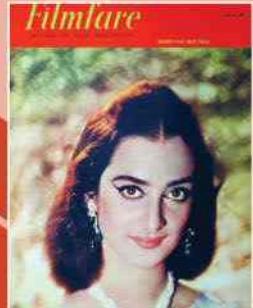
PHOTOGRAPH: FARROKH CHOTHIA

Breaking News

RAJESH KHANNA TIES THE KNOT WITH A 16-YEAR-OLD NAMED DIMPLE.

Get your recap of Bollywood with Filmfare issues from 1954 to 1999.

The Filmfare Vintage Collection. Only on magzter.com



FILMFARE

Fit hai! Hit hai

BHUMI PEDNEKAR SHARES HER HOLISTIC FITNESS TECHNIQUES WITH **RAGHUVENDRA SINGH**

PHOTOGRAPH: ABHAY SINGH | HAIR & MAKE-UP: SUBHASH VAGAL



PHOTOGRAPH: VIRAL BHAYANI

Remember the plump Sandhya Varma from last year's superhit *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*? Well, the young debutante had to pile on 23 kilos for that role in the Yash Raj Film. That's a brave decision for any actor and could have proved disastrous for a newbie. But Bhumi did it all – from hogging pizzas to snacking on ghee-laden *parathas* without regrets. It took her almost a year to get to the required weight. She confides she had the time of her life gorging on whatever she could lay her hands on during that period.

Her *tour de force* performance as Sandhya Varma was universally lauded and she even won the Filmfare Best Debut Award (Female). To our pleasant surprise she

looked svelte and fit and a completely different person altogether at the Filmfare Awards. Tell her that and she blushes. She reveals she managed to lose the extra flab in five months – in considerably lesser time than it took her to put it on. And she did it not by starving herself but making healthy changes in her food routine and working out extensively.

She says her health did suffer because of the excessive weight. "My back started hurting. My ankles hurt. Earlier I could wear heels and move around for 16 hours but with all that weight I couldn't. My biggest motivation to lose weight was the possibility of getting good work. I didn't want to miss out on opportunities. Unfortunately, there aren't roles for plus-size actors in our industry." She adds,



“ THERE AREN’T MANY ROLES FOR PLUS-SIZE ACTORS IN OUR INDUSTRY. MY BIGGEST MOTIVATION TO LOSE WEIGHT WAS GETTING GOOD WORK OPPORTUNITIES ”



LOSE IT LIKE BHUMI

- ➊ Begin your program now. Monday never comes
- ➋ It's important to detoxify your body at regular intervals
- ➌ Your diet is 60 per cent responsible for your weight. But one must engage in some physical activity
- ➍ Spend time with yourself. Gym is meditation for me
- ➎ Log onto Instagram and follow @loseitlikebhumi
- ➏ The app My Fitness Pal helped me keep track of my weight loss
- ➐ Aloe vera juice is great for weight loss

“IT'S TAKEN ME A YEAR TO CUT MY SIZE. THE WEIGHT LOSS HAPPENED SLOWLY. TODAY, EVEN IF I GO ON A VACATION AND HOG, I WON'T PILE ON THE KILOS IMMEDIATELY”

“My mother and I came up with a plan to get back in shape.”

The first thing that needed changing was her *chalta hai* attitude towards fitness. She always enjoyed walking, so she went back to doing

that. Then, she included one hour of gym in her daily routine. “I used to go to the gym before. But lazy that I am, I'd just enjoy the sauna and come home.

Initially, working out was difficult. But soon one hour stretched to two. I

started looking forward to my workouts.” She also started swimming and playing badminton. All that cardio helped balance the weight training. She also included Bollywood dance as a form of cardio in her routine.

The next step was to hire trainers Rahul Rana and Pranay. “I started weight training every alternate day, which helps form strong muscles. I used lighter weights and more reps as I didn't want to bulk up. Cardio helps increase the metabolism. I like functional training as it is a mix of weight and cardio and offers the best results,” she says. “Gradually, I gave up doing cardio in the gym because I was playing badminton, swimming and dancing – my dance trainer Subhash sir helped me lose weight. I'm not much into yoga but took to meditation to calm down. Soon, I will incorporate yoga into my routine. It's great for holistic health”

With co-star Ayushmann Khurana in *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*

EVEN WHEN I WAS BIG, I WORE WHAT I WANTED TO. I PARTIED A LOT. I ENJOYED EQUAL AMOUNT OF ATTENTION FROM THE OPPOSITE SEX

A nutritious diet is as important to gain a healthy body as an exercise regime says Bhumi. She started by removing gluten from her diet. She gave up rice too. She couldn't do without rotis, so she opted for *ragi*, *bajra* and *jowar rotis*. She has a sweet tooth. To satiate that her mother prepared naturally sweetened sweets out of dried *anjeer* (figs). "My aim was to eat less than 90 grams of carbohydrates per day. My mother used little or no oil in the preparations and still served yummy food."

She mines the Internet for information regarding nutrition. Bhumi starts her day with two glasses of lukewarm water with one drop of lime. Her

breakfast consists of one slice of non-wheat bread with three egg whites. In a day, she ends up eating up to six egg whites because protein intake is a must when you're working out. Lunch consists of one big bowl of *daal* and non-wheat *rotis* laced with some homemade white butter. She has some skinned milk/green tea/black coffee in the evening along with crackers or almonds. She eats a huge bowl of *salad* around 8pm and follows it up with grilled fish or chicken for dinner.

The actor says one should never give in to body shaming. "Confidence has a lot to do with weight but it's never been the case in my life. Even when I was big, I wore what I wanted to,

MY GOODIE BASKET



I feel hungry every two hours. So I carry a basket with me all the time. It has *ghar ki chai*, green tea, fruit and a *roti* with some *sabzi*. I also carry pomegranate because it gives you instant energy. I keep a packet of glucose biscuits along with nuts and seeds.



I partied and I enjoyed equal amount of attention from the opposite sex." She continues, "Many people have written to me on social media, confiding how their husbands or wives don't love them because they are fat. That is disturbing. I realise how lucky I have been because in my house physical appearance was never given undue importance. Our breakfast conversation was more about the economy of the country, about growth... inspirational conversation. We were always told that we girls are beautiful. My weight never came in my way of happiness. It's a wrong approach to life."

She's content with her present, fit figure and would like to remain that way. Size zero is a no-no for her. "I was never a skinny girl. This is the smallest I have been in life. But I was never grossly overweight. As a regular Indian girl, my goal was to be fit. Now I have reached that stage where I feel healthy and happy. My skin and hair is better. I don't have any uneasiness. It's a holistic wellness. I spent time de-cluttering my mind. My approach in life is towards wellness. I party. That's why I take care of myself."

Bhumi cautions one shouldn't go in for quick fix solutions. "It is good to take support of technology to lose weight but if you want permanent results it can only happen naturally. It's taken me a year to cut my size. The weight loss happened slowly. Today, even if I go on a vacation and hog for a month, I won't pile on the kilos." ■

exclusives

what's on their mind?

CHILL PILL

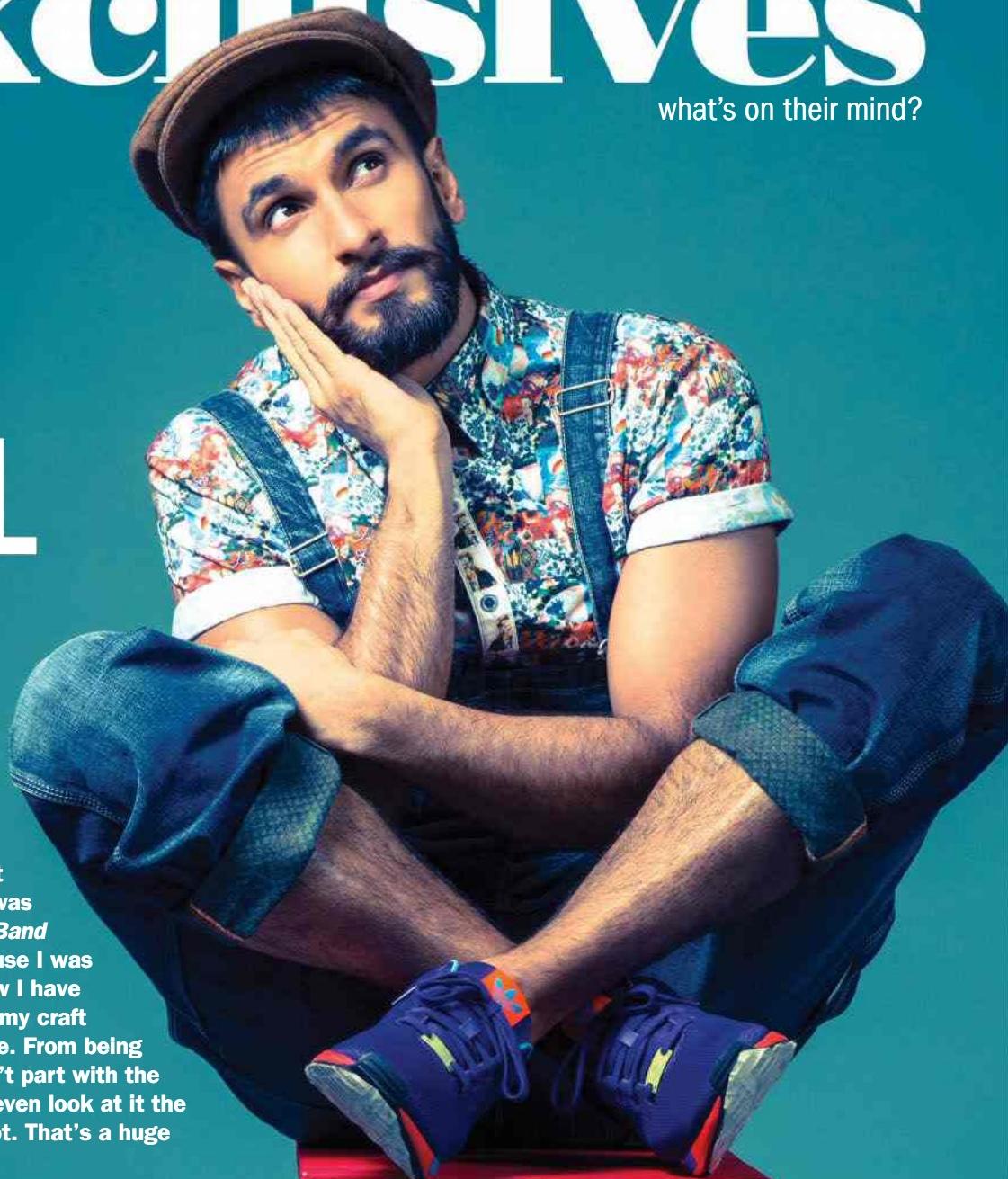
“Somewhere, there’s change in me. I’ve learnt to trust myself and my abilities. Earlier, I used to function out of nervous energy. I was so over-energetic in *Band Baaja Baaraat*, because I was actually nervous. Now I have become confident of my craft and more comfortable. From being someone who couldn’t part with the script, today I don’t even look at it the night before the shoot. That’s a huge evolution for me.”

Ranveer Singh on his newfound sense of calm

Amitabh Bachchan defies age and time pg 42

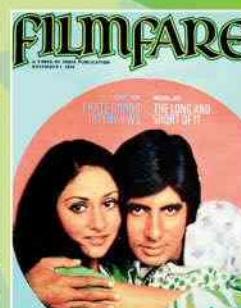
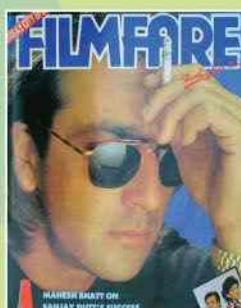
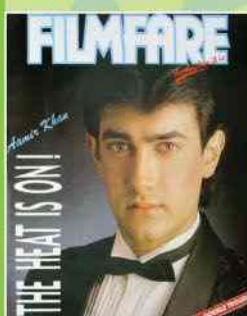
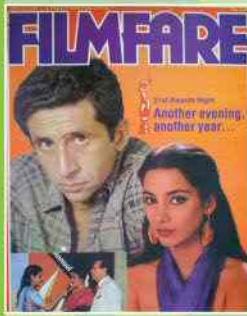
Deepika Padukone on cloud nine pg 52

PHOTOGRAPH: PRASAD NAIK



Just In

SHARMILA TAGORE STOPPED FROM WEARING A BIKINI FOR “AN EVENING IN PARIS.”



FILMFARE

Get your recap of Bollywood with Filmfare issues from 1954 to 1999.
The Filmfare Vintage Collection. Only on magzter.com

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

JOHN ABRAHAM IS ALL SET TO SET IGNITE THE SCREEN WITH KICKS AND PUNCHES, NOT TO MENTION HIS LEAN, MEAN ABS. HE TALKS TO FILMFARE ABOUT BEING AN ACTION STAR AND WHY THE INDUSTRY SHOULD TAP FRESH TALENT...

PHOTOGRAPHS: PRASAD NAIK

Chiselled abs, mammoth arms, a rough exterior... and he's also handsome to boot — no wonder his upcoming film is called *Rocky Handsome*. Wait, *Johnny Handsome* would have been a far cooler title na? But that has romantic connotations while *Rocky Handsome* is a hardcore action film inspired by action thriller *Man From Nowhere*. John isn't apologetic about working in a remake. He gruffly answers that his director Nishikant Kamat has put much of his own vision into the storyline. He informs that while the film does have stylised action it has an emotional core too. Action is seen something of a sure bet in the film industry... after sex and of course, Shah Rukh Khan. And John

seems to have found his niche in punching out bad guys and jumping off fast moving cars.

One constant for action stars is a ripped body. Even action superstars like Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger have to sweat it out every day to look good on screen. In fact, they happen to look superfit despite their advancing years.

Pumping iron seems to be John's religion too. His day doesn't seem

right if he hasn't indulged in some kind of a workout, even when he's shooting out of Mumbai. Apparently, he carries some functional training equipment in his van and hunting for a gym becomes his first priority when he shoots abroad. "I try to stay fit through the year. All my films this year and the next have some action in them. So, it's important that I stay this way."

John has made certain changes in

"Parties, movie screenings and events have one thing in common - late nights. I sleep early. I usually wake up when people are getting home at 4.30 am"

IL



his lifestyle to adopt a more holistic approach to fitness. Like fellow fitness maniac Akshay Kumar, he gets up at 4:30 am and works out. Ask him about that and he grins.

"Parties, movie screenings and events have one thing in common – late nights. I sleep early. I usually wake up when people are getting home at 4.30 am," he smiles. He has also taken to transforming his body to meet his director's needs. It's not an easy thing to achieve and John asserts that. "Transformation takes a toll. I appreciate actors who do it. I work hard to suit my character by doing that. It helps the director's vision."

He's got that kind of bod right now, which will gel cohesively with a period drama. Maybe he should send out feelers to filmmakers Sanjay Leela Bhansali or SS Rajamouli. He laughs at that and says he was blown away by *Bajirao Mastani*. "I loved *Bajirao* and what Bhansali has done. I gave him a hug for making a very special film. Yes I would love to do a period film, especially play a warrior as few of us qualify for such roles."

Injuries are a constant threat to action stars. The outtakes in a Jackie Chan films shown during the end credits tell a grim tale. No amount of wirework or safety devices can guarantee a 100 per cent injury-free environment. Reportedly, John got injured during both *Rocky Handsome* and *Dishoom*. He brushes that off as being part of the job. "I just got three surgeries on my right knee. Three days after I threw my crutches off,

I was back again shooting action for *Dishoom*. I've have no time to be fatalistic. I do not feel sorry for myself and I am sure no one else does as well."

A little birdie told us that he and co-actor Varun Dhawan not only bonded like bread and cheese on the sets of *Dishoom*, they became workout partners too, motivating each other to go for that one extra rep. "Yes. Varun and I worked out together. We get along well on and off camera. That's why I believe that *Dishoom* will have a part 2,3,4,5 ... It's a younger *Dhoom*. It has the potential to get bigger and bigger."

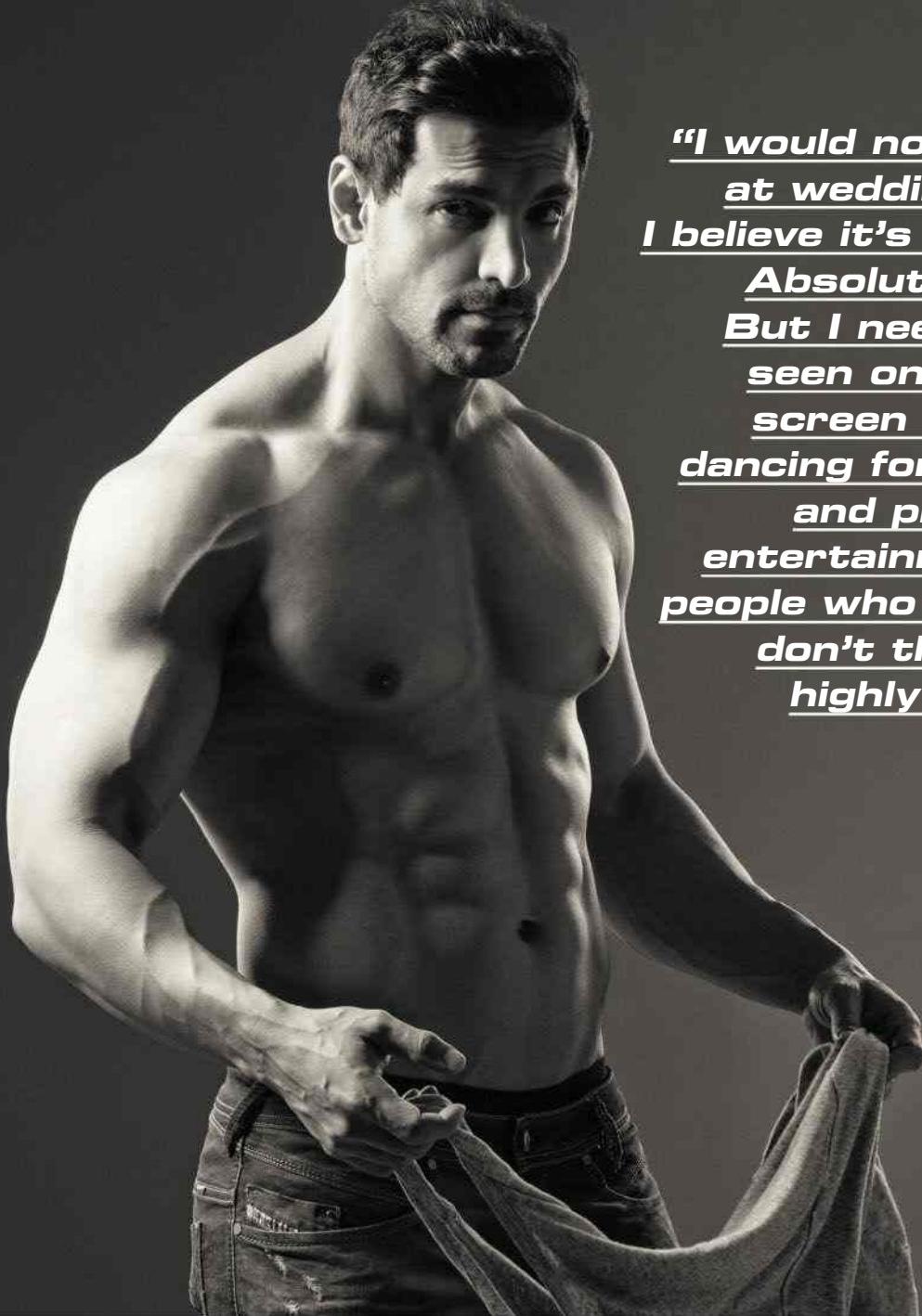
We caught of a sort of a Jai-Veeru vibe between them alright. The still released has them riding a motorbike with a sidecar *a la Sholay* and he admits they were inspired by the classic. "You are bang on about the *Sholay* feel. I told director Rohit Dhawan the same thing. Of course, I would be careful about comparing our film to *Sholay*. That was legendary. We hope we create our own story."

There is certain intensity, a certain maturity, a certain calmness about him nowadays. He's taken to signing lesser films and is known to have even said no to proposals coming his way. He's more concerned towards honing his craft. "I like doing lesser films, just one a time. It's important to get into the skin of the character and live it till the time you're with the film. After *Madras Café*, I wanted to select quality scripts. I went into thinking mode and I realised we have content but screenplay is an issue here. Hence I take time to agree on projects."

"I threw off my crutches three days after the knee surgeries. I was back again shooting action for Dishoom. I have no time to be fatalistic. I do not feel sorry for myself and I am sure no one else does as well"







"I would not dance at weddings. Do I believe it's wrong? Absolutely not. But I need to be seen on the big screen and not dancing for money and providing entertainment to people who anyway don't think too highly of you"

Vicky Donor made him a successful producer and he's keen to produce more meaningful films. He's been meeting directors, writers and actors and wants to select only the *crème de la crème*. Reading prospective scripts and zeroing in on the best also takes time. That's one reason he has gone quiet on the shooting front. "I love being an actor first and getting into production was a natural progression. I find it difficult to sell my ideas. Shoojit

Sircar and I often joke that people are interested in me as an actor and him as a director. I have a vision as a producer. I wonder who will be fortunate enough to see that and pick up all my films."



e refuses to divulge any details about his future prospects as a producer. There were

rumours of him making a sequel to Vicky Donor but he says nothing of that sort is on the cards right now. "Shoojit and I are planning something together again as director and actor and as co-producers, whatever comes first." Talk about being cryptic.

He helped launch Ayushmann Khurana's career and there were talks that he was all set to launch his cousin Harshvardhan Rane, who recently made his debut with the



"I was the first one to say that we need more heroes. I still believe there is a dearth of heroes. We also need more female actors"

romance *Sanam Teri Kasam*. John interrupts at this point and rebuts that Harshvardhan isn't a relative. "Harshvardhan is not my cousin. But I hold him close to heart. He's like my younger brother. I will always wish well for him. I believe he has a future." He wants to launch other actors too, believing that fresh talent is better for the industry. John has made it without any godfather and perhaps helping others realise their dreams is his way of paying it back to the industry. Says he, "I will launch more newcomers. I guess I have become the custodian for newcomers

as few actors are producing films that are centered around them. I wish to assume the role of a creative producer and launch new faces."

He doesn't consider the younger crop of actors like Varun Dhawan, Sidharth Malhotra, Sooraj Pancholi or Tiger Shroff as competition. "I was the first one to say that we need more heroes. I still believe there is a dearth of heroes. We also need more female actors. The boys you mentioned are super. I'd love to produce films with them." One 'kid' he has warmed up to is his co-star in *Rocky Handsome*, child actor Diya. "She has changed

my impression about working with kids. She's temperamentally brilliant and a sweet child."

Sports is his other passion in life besides acting. He's taken his passion to another level by actively involving himself in sports-related activities. "I'd like to be associated with all kinds of sport. I was sport inclined in school. Football came to me naturally. So I now own North-East United FC. I would love to own a Moto GP team with Anand Mahindra as I believe he has a vision in Motorsport for India."

There were rumours that he was making a film on *Isle Of Man* on bike racing. He says the project is very much on cards. "The film on the *Isle Of Man* is being worked on. We are practically there. Bike racing is close to my heart and people will identify with me with such a film. I promise, I will make it special." Considering that he's a bosom friend of Mahi, it was also rumoured that he was to do a special cameo in the Mahendra Singh Dhoni biopic that's currently being made but John denies any such involvement.

We wonder if endorsement by film stars actually helps promote sports and John answers in the affirmative. "Yes, celebrity endorsements by stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Abhishek Bachchan and me from films help create a platform. Later, it's the presentation and the sport itself."

The talk veers to him making strong comments against stars dancing at weddings. We want to know what has irked him, considering he played a pole dancer in *Desi Boyz* and is known to shake legs at award functions too. "I would not dance at weddings. You're absolutely correct. Do I believe it's wrong? Absolutely not. It's just my choice. I believe I need to be seen on the big screen and not dancing for money and providing entertainment to people who don't think too highly of you in any case. I have heard them talk and it's demeaning." ■

“Every day is an *adventure*”

No actor has had such an oeuvre, no superstar battled more cataclysms and walked through it all with a swagger that's still undeniably sexy... writes Farhana Farook about the one and only Amitabh Bachchan

His has been a tempestuous relationship with Time. Someone whom Time loved generously yet tested inexplicably. Right from the time when he gave 12 flops in a row... till Zanjeer trumpeted his rise to stardom. And then at the peak came the catastrophic troughs... the accident on the set of *Coolie*, the misadventures in politics, the ABCL disaster, bankruptcy and even myasthenia gravis... Then Time, once again, came knocking with *Mohabbatein* and *Kaun Banega Crorepati*. Since then it's been a golden run... his roles attempting the audacious, the adventurous. *Baghban*, *Sarkar*, *Black*, *Nishabd*, *Cheeni Kum*, *Paa*, *Bhootnath* and now *Piku*... age seems to have eased him off all constraints, liberated him from all compulsions. Over to the actor... for whom acting is the very breath of life...

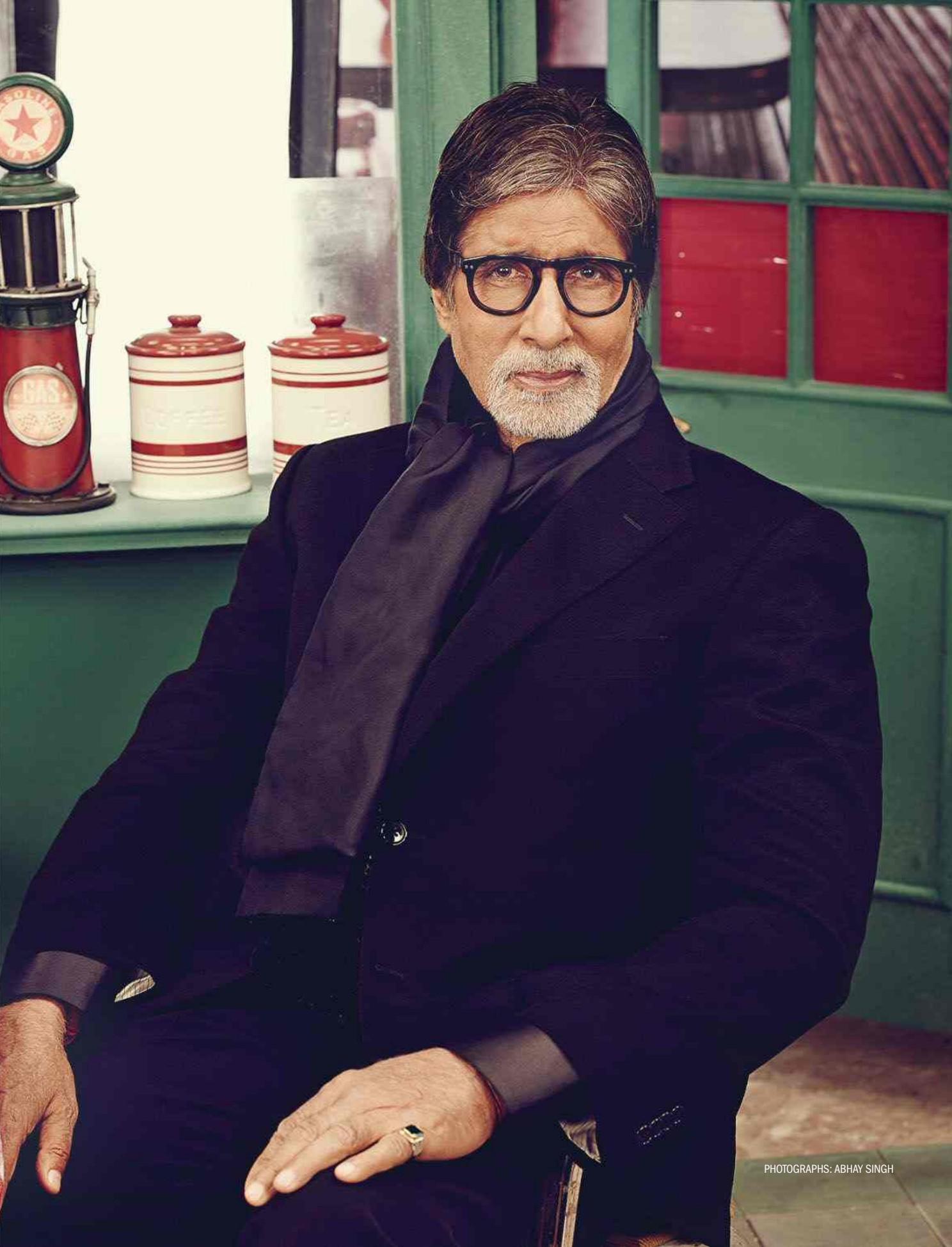
You swept the awards this season with *Piku*. You even tweeted, “Time is short ... so Best Actor critics at Filmfare for *Piku* ... happy and content!!” What emotions do awards still stir in you despite a legacy of achievements?

The ‘time is short’ comment was for my EFs on the blog telling them that I’d be unable to reply to them as I normally do because it was late. After the award ceremony I was flying back to Kolkata where I am shooting (Sujoy Ghosh’s *T3N*). It had nothing to do with the ‘time in my life’ as you may have interpreted. Yes, I’m happy and grateful that many institutions have given me the recognition of an award for *Piku*. I don’t believe that I’ve a ‘legacy of achievements’. Achievement, to me, is something personal and within. I shall not debate, argue or be skeptical of

awards and award ceremonies. I shall respect the decisions of those that give me the honour and will not be disrespectful if they don’t.

I doubt if creative individuals work with the intent of winning an award. Winning recognition yes, but not awards. I’d imagine that I’m no different from the others. Work, in my profession, is a challenge, an excitement, an opportunity to mingle with great minds and talents. That is foremost. Love and appreciation from the audience is prime. When I win an award, the sense of gratitude is for all connected with the film. Singularly any person or I in a film is nothing. The efforts of many people go in making the artiste involved look good. My emotion then is towards those who helped me to win that recognition and those who thought me worthy enough to get it.

“Age restricts your thinking ‘ahead’. There is little or limited time that stares at you; so you dwell on what has gone by for there are no limits there”



PHOTOGRAPHS: ABHAY SINGH

Was playing Bhaskor Bannerjee liberating as an actor, that is playing someone who was 'real' and not larger-than-life, someone who alternated between being stubborn and yet endearingly sentimental?

The late Manmohan Desai always believed that audiences wish to see that what they have not seen on screen. Bhaskor in *Piku* was an intelligent representation of that process – perhaps never seen or talked of before, a ‘constipated’ lead, a liberal father and one whose life revolved around his ‘movements’... pun unintended. This at my age and position in the industry is in a sense ‘larger than life’ because it has not been seen before. Manji perhaps referred his observation to acts and deeds that were large in fantasised visuals or situations. *Piku* was a clever interpretation of that; real yet not seen before and not necessarily liberating. Actors are made to do things that are fantasised ...my constipation in the film was a fantasy for me. And hopefully, a fantasy for the audiences as well. That made it endearing!

***Piku* also tackled an interesting father-daughter relationship... the father is candid about her ‘not being a virgin’ and she’s casual about getting her boyfriend home...**

As a parent what’s the marked change in parent-child dynamics observed today?

I thought it to be very progressive with elements of modern thought. The beauty of this outspokenness was its presence in a modest and not forgetting an orthodox

“Aaradhyा does recognise the hoardings on the streets... she has been demonstrating, quite cutely, my dance moves she has noticed on TV”





With Irrfan Khan in *Piku*

“Actors are made to do things that are fantasised ...my constipation in *Piku* was a fantasy for me. And hopefully, a fantasy for the audiences as well. That made it endearing! ”

environment. You may have heard or experienced this behind closed doors, but here it was being presented for public consumption. That came as a surprise in the film and at times surprises are welcome. With regard to parent-child dynamics, you've to consider and keep the context of the changing times. Each generation has been through it. But in the film it was lovely to see the past generation accepting the present generation's thoughts and habits. At times one has to move with the times. I do not find it too difficult.

Reports suggest that you're tackling yet another father-daughter relationship in Vikas Bahl's forthcoming film...

Vikas Bahl has met me and narrated an idea, that's it. The creatives are still being worked upon by him. It would be improper to assume what the story or subject pertains to. I'm hesitant to state that what you have perceived may not entirely be true.

Do daughters eventually play 'mother' to fathers – the equation changing over time?

I believe they do. Mine does. And I simply love it.

The audiences found your performance in *Wazir* a delectable one... What worked for the film?

Wazir is a smart film, intelligently written (Vidhu Vinod Chopra and Abhijat Joshi), constructed, directed (Bejoy Nambiar) and edited (Chopra and Joshi). A film is engaging when audiences come out of the theatre, discussing and talking about it. They did that in *Wazir*. Most understood its plot, some were a bit confused but when explained, admired its narration. Some of the comments one hears about most films is that 'three to five minutes in a film and we know what it's going to be about'. Here it was different. Till the very end no one was prepared for the surprise. That has led to many going to watch it again and again. They know the story and the plot now.

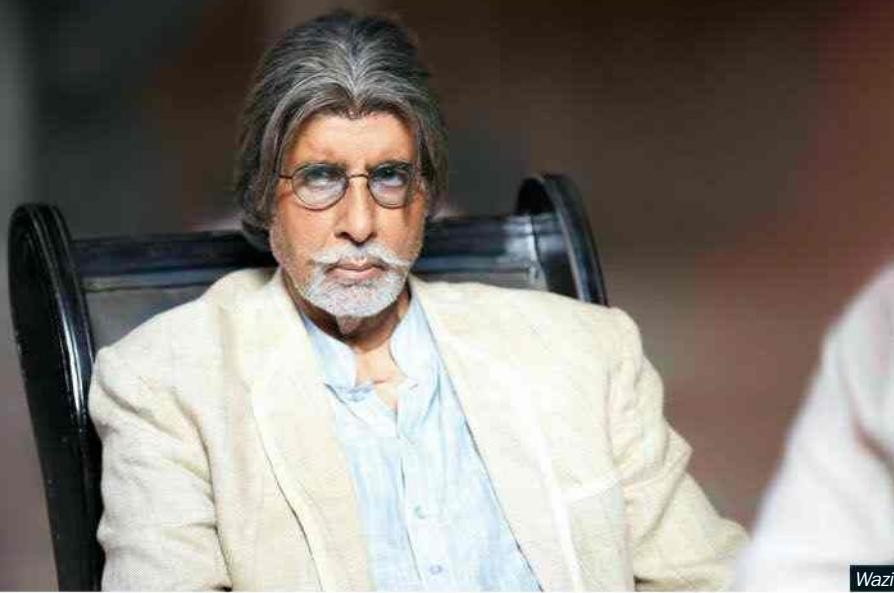
But they go to see how it was being cleverly designed by this wheelchair bound Omkar Nath Dhar. People did not expect what they normally do from a lead. It shocked them. And when the truth was revealed, they clapped. That was the greatest acknowledgement of its success.

If the game of chess is a metaphor for life, what are the rules that one must remember?

That there are 64 squares in life where the game of life is played by *mohras* that possess varied qualities. In life, as in the game, there is the King and the Queen, the elephant, the horse, the camel... and the pawn. All of them have a role to play. Some in life move diagonally, some straight through with immense destructive power, others in crooked manifestations. Some have that generous quality of being destructive and active in whichever action or direction they choose. And some, who seem less privileged, insignificant and small, treat life one step at a time. But when they reach the other end, when they reach the ultimate destination of conquest, an achievement, they get transformed into the *Wazir*, the Queen with extraordinary strengths - the power to destroy anyone and everyone in protection of him that rules, the King, the Raja. The game is indeed a metaphor of life and the *mohras* are the innumerable varied circumstances, permutations and combinations that life challenges us with. *Shatranj* reveals the genius of the ancient Indian mind. The more you think about it the more you realise its greatness, not just as a game but as an allegory of life.

Sujoy Ghosh's thriller *TE3N* takes you back to your favourite Kolkata – what has changed and what remains unchanged about the beautiful city?

There have been perhaps material changes in the city, industry and development and modernisation to match and keep up with the rest. But what has remained unchanged, most thankfully, are the people and the spirit of Kolkata. Its historic and



Wazir

“Chess is indeed a metaphor of life and the mohras are the innumerable varied circumstances, permutations and combinations of life’s challenges. Shatranj is not just just a game but... an allegory of life”

much admired culture and traditions remain the same – undiluted and without a trace of any pollution (and I do not mean the atmospheric pollution that Delhi unfortunately suffers from). The word passion is synonymous with the Kolkatan.

As one grows older, one tends to hold on to memories and nostalgia all the more... Do you agree?

Yes. And if you were to ask me why, I'd say age restricts your thinking 'ahead'. There is little or limited time that stares at you; so you dwell on what has gone by for there are no limits there.

Sujoy Ghosh said that your role in TE3N takes you further in the 'fearless' phase that you are in as an actor... what's the adventure in playing the unconventional role?

If you question 'unconventional', then you must first define 'conventional'! Can you? Let me do the honours for you. There's no conventional or unconventional in the world, forget cinema. For the two conventionalisms to exist

there needs to be an understanding on what is often referred to as 'original'. 'Original' and 'fake' are the most meaningless words in the creative lexicon. God was the last originator, the rest of us are just copyists. For an actor to submit that he or she plays 'unconventional' or 'conventional' roles is akin to immersing themselves in the most dreaded professional falsehood that can drown them. Since there is no original, there cannot be tributaries of creativity. Sujoy, may the Lord bless his wisdom, uses 'fearless' as a descriptive of creative effort. But every actor is burdened with a job that is in the realm of make-believe and creative effort. Every actor fights to redeem the character asked of him to portray. No, 'fearless' is inappropriate. I can fear having to battle a lion barehanded but to put that as a 'phase' in my creative choice, is to me a disqualification. Every day in the life of an actor is an adventure. If it is not then they are disrespecting the profession. This is not a generalisation. It is my thinking and process.



What struck you about Nawazuddin Siddiqui as an actor? His is an inspirational tale – from being a farmer to showbiz...

Just because you are a farmer and you've become a respected member of showbiz... this is bad figure of speech in defining an inspirational tale. What are you trying to say? That farmers cannot be entertainers in showbiz?

Nawaz's an inspirational story because his immense talent and hard work brought him to where he deservedly is today. His performances are simple. It's the most difficult task for an actor to be simple in front of the camera. Which is why he is so loved and admired. I never found him, and I am sure neither have others who have worked with him, deliver his dialogue by 'rote'. He shall spend just that nano moment to understand what the other actor in front of him has said, even



“It has been a delight to be in her (*Vidya Balan*) company on the set. Her laughter comes right from the bottom of her stomach. It’s a very virtuous quality. Not many possess that. Translated into creativity, it’s something that I admire most”

though he and we, all know that we have been through the script a million times and know what is to be said. But to behave that it's being heard for the very first time and then say the lines, is what defines a great actor. Nawaz has that degree of greatness in him.

What do you find fascinating about Vidya Balan as a co-actor, someone whose charisma you had reacted to when you saw her years ago in a commercial?

I cannot remember seeing her for the first time in a commercial and my reaction to her. But I do remember seeing her in her first Hindi

film *Parineeta* and immediately commented to a friend and accomplished director-producer, that she would find immense recognition in the industry. It has been a delight to be in her company on the set. Her laughter comes right from the bottom of her stomach. It's a virtuous quality. Not many possess that. Translated into creativity, it's something that I admire most.

Most artistes say that they live for that illusion that happens between ‘action’ and ‘cut’. Can you describe that mesmerising moment when the camera turns on...

Very aptly described – the ‘illusion’ between ‘action’ and ‘cut’. To me it is still an illusion and may it ever remain so. I have been holding its hand for the past 45 years.

How does Aaradhy react when she sees you on film or on TV? Does she particularly like any of your films?

She has yet to see my films or films of any other member of our family; which collectively is a lot of film. But she does recognise the odd hoardings on the streets as we drive by. Recently, she has been demonstrating, quite cutely, some of my dance moves that she has noticed on TV.

You’re known to be a *ghazal* aficionado. Please can you share a *ghazal* which is your perennial favourite and why?

There are many that I personally love and am very fond of. Describing them would take time and effort and consume space not accommodative in this interview. Why? Would be personal. Not for public consumption.

Any other art form you wished you had mastered?

I believe, I have yet to master any art form. But I wish I could learn music, both singing and playing instruments. I also wish I could be proficient in many languages. I struggle with just - Hindi and English.

As an actor would this be the most interesting phase? Your directors are getting younger, the stories are getting crisper and your roles are tapping unexplored territories ...

I would say I am happy that I get a few jobs these days. That's it. ■

People's Choice

PRIYANKA CHOPRA CONTINUES TO WIN LAURELS ABROAD BUT SHE ENJOYS DOING THAT UNUSUAL ROLE BACK HOME TOO. **RAGHUVENDRA SINGH** CHATS WITH THE GLOBAL STAR



Priyanka Chopra in *Jai Gangaajal*

“The day you have everything, you should quit. My hunger is for newer and newer achievements.

I like being good at everything I do... like walking on a path, on which I might fail but at least it will be my own”

She wowed the West with her super act as Alex Parrish, a terror suspect, in the hit American TV show *Quantico*. She even walked away with the People's Choice Awards for that. To top that she was one of the presenters at 88th Academy Awards, the first Indian to be so honoured.

Back home too, she continues to make her presence felt. She's been chosen for India's third highest civilian honour, the Padma Shri. And before that her perky-turned-poignant act as Kashibai in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's epic *Bajirao Mastani*, won her the Filmfare Award for the

Best Supporting Actor (Female). And now as tough cop, Abha Mathur, in Prakash Jha's *Jai Gangaajal*, it's a dramatic switch for Priyanka Chopra.

From the bejeweled Kashi to the uniform donning Abha Mathur, the talented actor can straddle diverse roles with ease. She's always been fascinated by uniforms as her father, the late Dr Ashok Chopra, was an army officer. Uncannily, her gait and bearing also changed when she slipped into the uniform during the shooting. “Every night, Dad would polish his shoes and I'd polish mine. For me, uniform means principles, values, discipline and that's



exactly what my character Abha Mathur stands for."

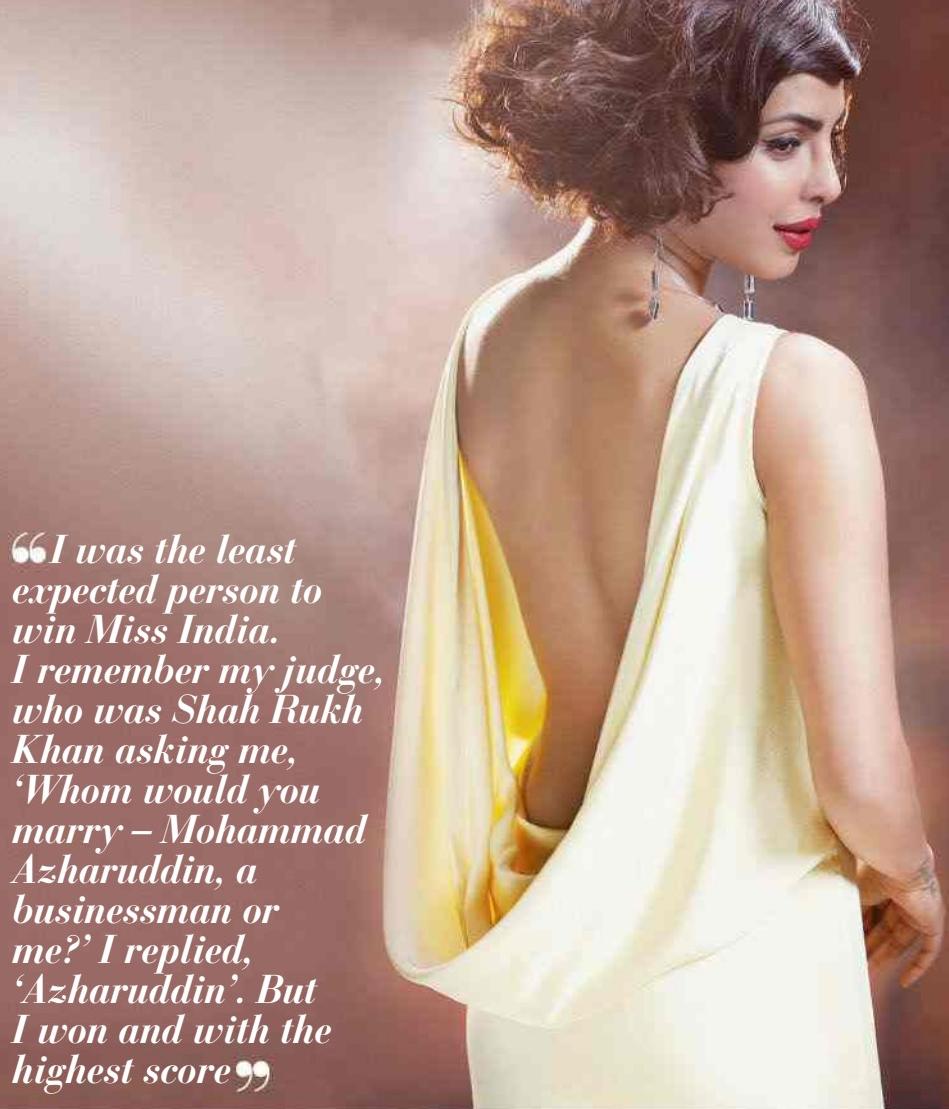
She was initially apprehensive about playing a straight-laced cop, given that Ajay Devgn has already aced it in *Gangajal* and the *Singham* series. She didn't want to go the masculine route but lends a feminine touch to her role. "Abha wears earrings along with her uniform. She beats up people but doesn't do it like a man. She doesn't use cuss words or take a macho stance yet she comes across as an authority figure," she says explaining the unique nuances of her role.

Talking about the role, she continues, "The police are treated like mere security guards. Nobody obeys them. Policemen even get beaten up if they take a stance. Abha comes in this sort of a scenario and pushes for reform."

Prakash Jha makes his debut as an actor in the film and

Priyanka had a gala time being the 'senior' on the sets. "I'd say, 'Sir ab aaya na unth pahaad ke neeche' (a phrase used to denote compliance). Prakashji is a cultured and educated person. I've begun reading Hindi literature thanks to him. He's super funny as well," she smiles.

The talk veers to women empowerment. We may preach it from the pulpits but women still face the threat of rape and abuse. Priyanka believes education is the answer. "Ours is the only country where every 100 mile the landscape changes... the



“I was the least expected person to win Miss India. I remember my judge, who was Shah Rukh Khan asking me, ‘Whom would you marry – Mohammad Azharuddin, a businessman or me?’ I replied, ‘Azharuddin’. But I won and with the highest score”

language, the culture, the festivals... change. The only thing that can bind us is education. We're one of the youngest countries in the world. Sixty percent of our population is under the age of 35. When you educate children, you give them perspective, self-worth and also encourage them to respect other human beings." She elaborates that it will take several generations to let go off regressive practices. "If a girl is educated, she can contribute financially. If not financially, she can

nurture her family in the right way with an eye on health and hygiene. When you educate the girl, you educate the entire family."

She seems to be someone who has everything and yet appears hungry for more. "The day you have everything, you should quit. My hunger is for newer and newer achievements. I like being good at everything I do... like walking on a path, on which I might fail but at least it will be my own."

She waxes hilosophical about how the industry

shaped her as a person. "I'm an outsider, I didn't know anyone, I learnt everything on the job. I understood there are two ways for female actors – one where you do all the correct films, like safe films which you know will be successful or you work a path, which is your own. I decided to do both. I will always have one potboiler and one my kind of a film, which can go completely wrong. *Barfi* and *Mary Kom* went right but *Saat Khoon Maaf* and *What's Your Raashee?*

didn't. But at least I tried."

According to her, formula films also fail. "Every film has its own destiny. You can only do your best. I've always wanted to be a musician and have achieved that. It's become a trend. I believe that anyone can sing with right training. It's an extension of one's creativity. I also enjoy writing. Sometimes I write columns. Who knows

someday, I'll write a book. I have never done the same role twice except in *Don* and *Krrish* where they were sequels."

Contemporary and co-star Lara Dutta recently said some great things about her in a *Filmfare* interview and Priyanka gushes about that. "When I began, I was 17, Dia Mirza was 18 and Lara was 21. I was a child. I didn't know much about make-up,

clothes, accessories... Lara was a successful model. She has already won the Gladrag competition, she had done ads. I was the least expected person to win Miss India. I remember in the question answer round my judge, who was Shah Rukh Khan asked, 'Whom would you marry - Mohammad Azharuddin, a businessman or me?' I replied, 'Azharuddin'. But I won and with the

highest score." Coming back to Lara, She says, "I remember all three of us had to attend an event and we were getting ready in hotel Trident. I was doing my make-up. Lara noticed I was doing it all wrong. She suggested how I should be doing it.

I wanted to wear a pant suit but she chose a chic outfit for me. She treated me with respect when I was a nobody and that fuelled my drive. I had to teach myself how to walk, how to talk, how to behave after I won the Miss India crown. The period between Miss India and Miss World is a big transition in my life, where I literally went from being a girl to a woman."

She admits she grew up too fast. "I worked with Sunny

Deol, Akshay Kumar, Salman Khan when I was around 20. The only thing I knew was that I didn't want to be irrelevant.

When one big producer told me that girls here are interchangeable, it affected me badly. Then on I just wanted to be taken seriously as an actor. I wanted to be known as a professional, as a human being, not just for whom I was dating or whose party I had attended. I wanted to be known for my work." She doesn't deny that being a celebrity her personal life will generate interest.

"Of course, people can talk about my personal life, write about it, speculate about it and please do. But I want to be known by my work." ■



Priyanka Chopra and Prakash Jha on the set of *Jai Gangaajal*



Priyanka in the American TV show *Quantico*

"Of course, people can talk about my personal life, write about it, speculate about it and please do. But I want to be known by my work."

What dreams may come? . . .

After a victorious 2015, DEEPIKA PADUKONE is enjoying the little leisure and the little pleasures coming her way, writes SUMAN SHARMA

Deepika Padukone is on cloud nine these days after winning the Black Lady for her oh-so-real performance in *Piku*. She confides that initially people were wary why she'd chosen such an offbeat film. "They thought Shoojit Sircar, Irrfan Khan and myself formed a weird combination," she laughs. "But I had faith in the content of the film and in the honesty of our intention. And everything else followed. If, as artistes,

there's earnestness in you, the audience senses it because it comes through in your performance."

The same is true for *Bajirao Mastani*, where she trusted her instincts as much as she trusted her director Sanjay Leela Bhansali. She went with the spirit of the real-life warrior princess and breathed life into her character as Mastani. "Mastani had so many facets. She had a strong willpower; she was determined and focused. And at the same time, she



With Ranveer Singh in *Bajirao Mastani*

“I realised that there’s a Mastani in every woman. In some she is more pronounced. Even everyday situations call upon us to be confident and confrontational. I see a reflection of Mastani in today’s woman as well”



PHOTOGRAPHS: PRASAD NAIK

was vulnerable, romantic and beautiful. It was a challenge to blend all these traits and bring her alive on film." She adds, "When I read about Mastani, I realised that there's a Mastani in every woman. In some she is more pronounced. Even everyday situations call upon us to be confident and confrontational."

She swayed the audience with her porcelain beauty in the film – her poise and elegance adding to her character. She gives credit to director Bhansali, costume designer Anju Modi and her hair and make-up team for presenting her so beautifully. "My look for the *Deewani Mastani* song was inspired by that one pictorial reference we had — a painting and not a real image. We kept it minimal. I remember when the trailer was first aired Karan Johar called up to say, 'My God! What have you done? There's hardly any make-up or jewellery, yet you're looking so regal'."

The actor in her blossomed under SLB's firm tutelage, whom she describes as a tough director. "Shooting a song with Sanjay sir is like shooting a whole film. When I was shooting for the classical song *Mohe rang do lal*, I almost gave it up that day. I withdrew into a shell. I felt I couldn't do it anymore. This film was physically and mentally challenging." She continues, "But I discovered that whenever you fear you can't do something, there emerges the strength to do it. The





With Ranbir Kapoor in *Tamasha*



With Amitabh Bachchan in *Piku*

“I discovered that whenever you fear you can't do something, there emerges the strength to do it. The force is within you. You just have to tap it and channelise it. It's all there”

force is within you. You just have to tap it and channelise it.”

Also, debunking the myth that two actresses can never get along, Deepika and her co-star Priyanka Chopra got along like a house on fire. She points out there was no time for any tiff as they had only a couple of scenes and a song together. “Sanjayji was left wondering how we could be such good friends. He'd joke, ‘You should be upset with what she's wearing or you should say I don't want to wear this costume’. They wanted us to have a face-off so that the rancour would bring *jaan* in the scene. But we'd rehearse together, eat together and even leave together after pack-up.” She goes on to add that films are demanding on all friendships. “Films are all-consuming. When I was shooting for *Bajirao*... I was totally cut-off from my friends for more than a year. You have to sacrifice your personal time, your social life. You have to go to bed early to be on time the next day. To

be a thorough professional, you've got to make huge sacrifices. And your relationship, not only with actors but even your other friends and family takes a beating.”

Deepika was inspired by beau Ranveer Singh's high energy and fed off his high jinks. “While doing a fun film like *Dil Dhadakne Do*, Ranveer's energy is different. If he's doing a serious film like *Bajirao Mastani* then his energy is like that of the *Peshwa*. And he stays in that mood and zone. Off screen his energy is different. I can't match up to that and I don't intend to either.”

Apart from Bhansali, she enjoys a tremendous rapport with director Imtiaz Ali, someone whom she considers to be her guru. “I've worked with him in three films, the last being *Tamasha*. He's a nonjudgmental person. So you can talk to him about anything. He has been part my life right from the time when I started my career seven years ago. I value his opinion. And it goes both ways. He's open to criticism or any input

or advice from my end as well. Ranbir (Kapoor) and I never felt constrained by his scripts.”

She's all set to star opposite American superstar Vin Diesel in *XXX*. She believes she got noticed because of the global appeal of Hindi films. “India is the centre of attraction on the global map. Indian films are now being consumed by Russians, Germans, French, Chinese and Japanese audiences as well.”

Right now, she's enjoying some much needed ‘me’ time. “I like resting my mind, catching up with friends, hanging at home or cooking. I want to attend a cooking course. I find cooking therapeutic. In fact, I enjoyed baking when I was in school. My friends would come home and we'd bake brownies, cookies and have fun,” she recalls. “It would be hard to believe but I'm not a party person, I'm socially awkward. Rather, I'd like to learn playing an instrument. Be it the guitar or the piano,” she laughs leaving behind a melody... ■

“I find cooking therapeutic. In fact, I enjoyed baking when I was in school. My friends would come home and we'd bake brownies, cookies and have fun”

FAR FAR AWAY

Aditi Rao Hydari caught in a reflective mood in our photoplay

PHOTOGRAPHS: COLSTON JULIAN | HAIR & MAKE-UP: ELTON FERNANDEZ
STYLING: ALIA AL RUFAI | LOCATION: FUSION ACCESS

Outfit: ZARA

*INTENSE...
longings, memories, dreams*



*SHADOWS...
light up her desires, her passions*

Dress: Shivan and Narresh
Printed cape: Hemant and Nandita | Accessories: Accessorize



DON'T LOOK BACK...
at the hurt and the broken heart



WAITING...
for love's call once more

Top: Anand Bhushan
Pants: Tanieya Khanuja
Accessories: Accessorize



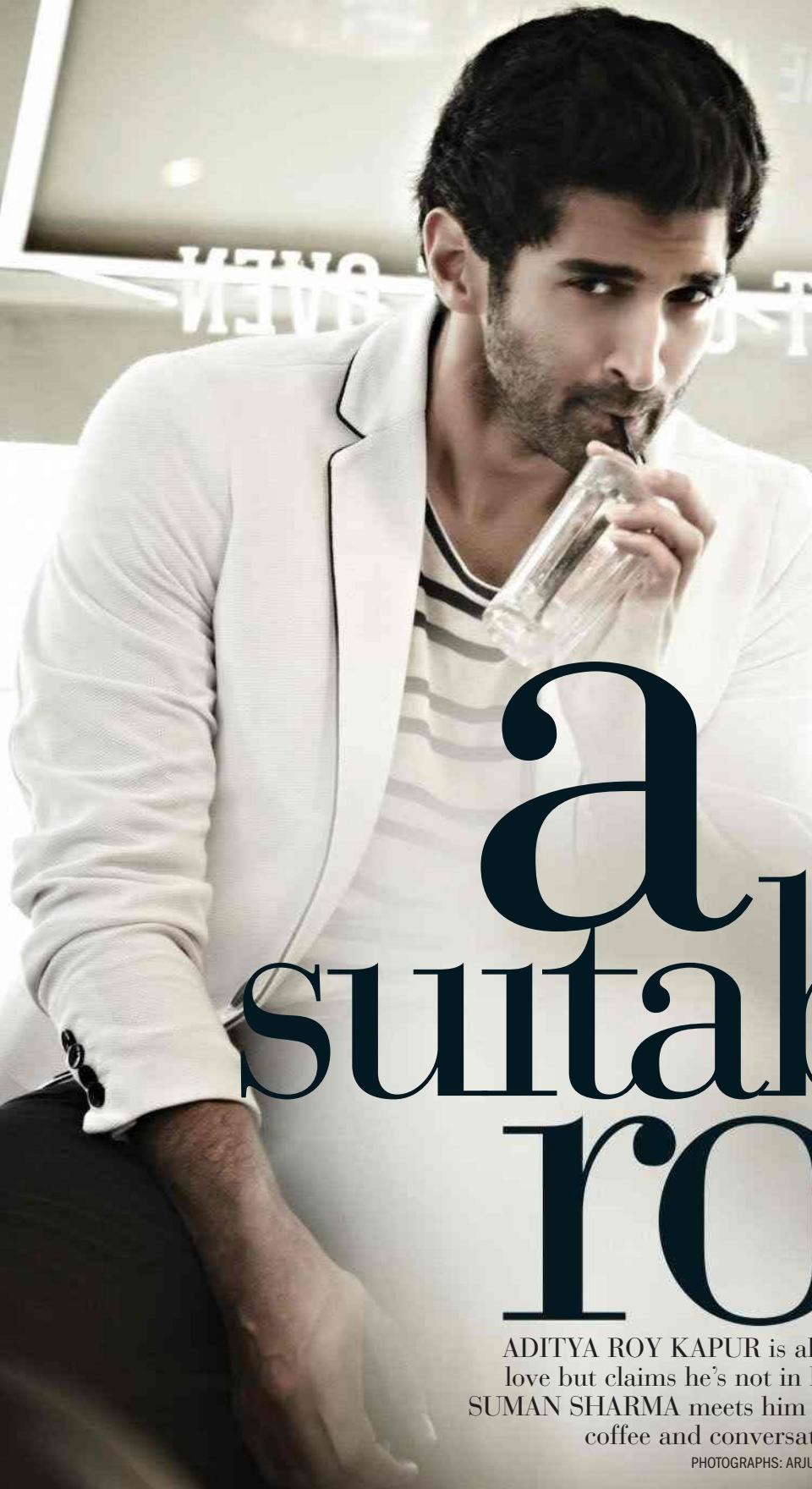
DRESSED TO KILL...
*you do that just for
yourself, sometimes*

Dress: Nachiket Barve
Black swimsuit: Shivan and Narresh
Accessories: Accessorize



SERENITY...
*the mind embraces it but
the heart does not...*

Outfit: H&M | Accessories: Accessorize



a suitable roy

ADITYA ROY KAPUR is all for love but claims he's not in love. SUMAN SHARMA meets him over coffee and conversations

PHOTOGRAPHS: ARJUN MARK

Aditya Roy Kapur's female fan following seems to have surged post the romantic saga *Fitoor* based on Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*. As the love struck artist, Noor, he kindled a million fantasies lying dormant as he romanced the ethereal Katrina Kaif. Love, as they say, never goes out of fashion. Aditya, too, is no stranger to love. In fact, he began young. "My first date was when I was in standard seven. She was my classmate. Holding hands was a big thing then. We went for a walk. Then we had cheese sandwich at this restraunt in Mahim, Rasika. That's what I could afford then. But it was uneventful. My problem is that I find it tough to compliment a girl," he says wryly. The first heartbreak came about when he was in standard nine. "I thought my life had ended. I was deeply upset. But then I passed my exam and that somewhere helped me bounce back. Also, one may face rejection in love but I've never cheated on anyone," he claims.

He values the letters he receives from his female fans though. "I save all my fan mail. It feels nice to know that they understand who I am. What I project about myself is coming through. I feel gratified with the thought that I can continue in this profession by their heartfelt gestures," says the actor who himself has never been a 'letters' person. "I'm not the

love letter type. But I've received letters when I was in relationships earlier. I've not written any but I've always replied to them. "Rumours about his on-off relationship with Shraddha Kapoor refuse to die but he denies being in a relationship. "Nobody has come along yet. It's not necessary to date someone at all times. These things are for the young. I'm growing old. Currently, I don't have time for dates or flings," he laughs.

But he lists out what he would seek in a partner, "She should be honest. She should be fun loving, non judgmental, love food, love her family... Am I talking about a wife or girlfriend?" he jokes adding, "An ideal relationship would be where you trust each other, complete each other. Just be happy being with each other. Don't try to change your partner." Experience

sure seems to be talking.

All said and done, Aditya's basically a reticent person who prefers his work to do the talking. "I still haven't been able to figure out how to manage PR and stay in the news. I don't know what to say about myself. Some people will call me 'a cool guy' for this and some will say I am jobless. I guess in this business if you are reserved, you have to project even that. You have to be loud about being quiet. That is something I need to understand," he states. As a person he dubs himself uninteresting. "I'm the boring type. I don't like to party. I enjoy playing late night football matches instead. Mohit Suri, Shraddha Kapoor, Ranbir Kapoor, Ayan Mukerji and Kalki Koechlin are my friends. Actually, my best friends are my school friends.

"
I don't have an account on Facebook. This is a stalker generation. I haven't stalked anyone but I believe I had the potential to become one. It's pointless that everybody should know everybody. It's weird to keep on tweeting
"



Fitoor

They have no connection with the industry." He values the professional inputs of his elder brother and managing director of Disney, Siddharth Roy Kapoor though. In fact, he was the one who urged him to do *Aashiqui 2*. He also considers what his brother and actor Kunal has to say. "But my mother is my biggest critic. She has no qualms saying, 'You didn't give your 100 per cent' or 'Your voice is weak'. Criticism is difficult to digest but it's necessary," says the actor who will feature in Shaad Ali's romance *Ok Jaanu*, a Hindi remake of the Tamil film *O Kadhal Kanmani*, opposite Shraddha Kapoor.

His fiercely private personality explains why he's not on social media. "I don't have a Facebook account. This is a stalker generation. I haven't stalked anyone but I believe I had the potential to become a stalker. It's pointless that everybody should know everybody. It's weird to keep tweeting. Although I am giving it a thought. But then it will become tedious. Everyone wishes you happy birthday and then you wish them back. You have to show that you care. It's too much. I am bad at answering messages too. I am lazy. Also, I fear that they will act over friendly." His aversion towards the technology overdrive is evident. "People are not present in conversations anymore.

They are preoccupied with their phones. Their mind is somewhere else. I hate this." That's why he prefers doing his own thing. "I have my life *yaar*. I meet friends. I play the guitar. I travel a lot alone. Travel lights up his soul. But he cautions, "When you are travelling, you have to be prepared for the down days also. Because every day cannot be great. Once in a while you will find a great experience... just as in life."

He credits this sense of maturity to having seen both failure and success. "I began as a supporting actor in *London Dreams*, *Action Replayy* and *Guzaarish*, which didn't do well. When I tasted success with *Aashiqui 2*, I didn't take it seriously. Nothing is permanent. And even if you fail, don't think it's

the end of the world," he cautions. "Like *Dawat-E-Ishq* didn't do as well. It feels bad when you put so much hard work and it doesn't work. Some people are going to like you and some are going to hate you. You can't control that. But you can't base your self-esteem on the way the people treat you. When your film does well people change the way they talk to you," he states. "You can't base your mood for the day on what you read about yourself in the paper whether it is about your relationship or your career. It's going to get you down. Stay a little detached. That's why I don't check newspapers to read stuff about me," says the sensitive actor.

He recalls the best time of his life when he was a VJ for MTV. "It gave me an excuse to bunk college. I had the best time of my life. I interviewed half the industry. It was an eye-opener. Now, I can



With Shraddha Kapoor in *Aashiqui 2*

“People are not present with you during a conversation. They are preoccupied with their phones. Their mind is somewhere else”

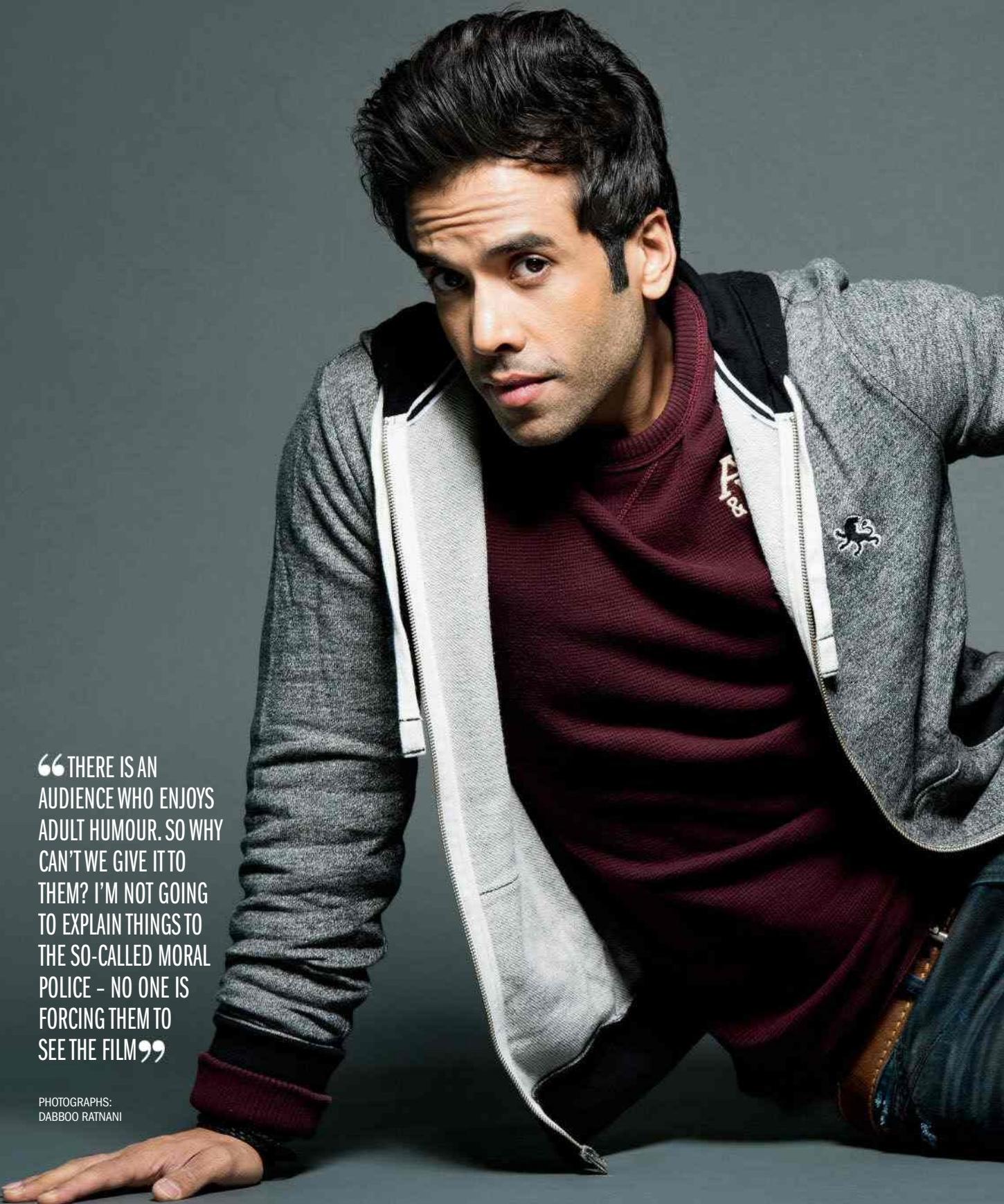




“
You can't base your mood for the day on what you read about yourself in the papers. Whether it's about your relationship or your career, it's going to get you down. Stay a little detached
”

read a journalist's mind. Like you could be now thinking, '*Aaj to kuch mila hi nahi. Shit!*' he laughs. "On a serious note, I grew comfortable with the camera. Every day was new. There was no monotony. As you grow older you feel more freedom."

He cherishes his 18th birthday the most. "I had to interview Salman Khan during *Salaam-E-Ishq*. I told my friends that I would finish the interview and then meet them around 11pm. But Salman came in very late. I was nervous and my palms grew sweaty in anticipation of meeting him. I was scared that if I happened to ask him a wrong question, he'd be put off." Thankfully, it turned out to be a fun interview. "I cut the cake and celebrated my birthday with Salman till the wee hours. I guess, even he remembers that," he recalls. ■



“THERE IS AN AUDIENCE WHO ENJOYS ADULT HUMOUR. SO WHY CAN’T WE GIVE IT TO THEM? I’M NOT GOING TO EXPLAIN THINGS TO THE SO-CALLED MORAL POLICE – NO ONE IS FORCING THEM TO SEE THE FILM”

MORE SEX PLEASE!

A little porn and lots of popcorn... **Suman Sharma** chats with **Tusshar Kapoor**, the poster boy of sex comedies



Tusshar Kapoor is in the news for his two back to back porn-coms *Kyaa Kool Hain Hum 3* directed by Umesh Ghadge and *Mastizaade* directed by Milap Zaveri. He seems to have found his comfort zone in adult comedies. But he shrugs and says he is comfortable doing all kind of movies. "It so happened that two of my adult comedies released back to back. Adult and porn comedy can also be interesting and fun like any other commercial film. I'm not going to be defensive about it."

He adds he's done all kinds of roles in the past and has been appreciated for them. "People should not forget that I did diverse films like *Shoot out At Wadala*, *Shor In The City*, *The Dirty Picture*, *Khakhee*, *Mujhe Kuch Kehna Hai* and also *Golmaal*... all different kind of films."

Tell him that *Mastizaade* and *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3* were replete with double entendre, some of which were cringe worthy and he shrugs his shoulders. Clearly, he doesn't subscribe to that view. "If the story is good, the role is good, the dialogue and punch lines are funny, I've no problem. I'm just an actor doing my job." Nevertheless, they weren't films that were a family watch. His own parents were divided on that. He chuckles, "Mom (producer Shobha Kapoor) yelled at me, 'Why are you doing these kinds of movies?' But dad (actor Jeetendra) says you should accept things good or bad as part of life. He's not like your strict, typical Indian father. He never criticises, rather he always has an encouraging word. He tells me to never take anything seriously. Do your best and leave the rest to God is what he believes in."

He mentions the most difficult part about his latest releases was to get them censored. He wasn't happy that the Censor ordered many cuts in the films. "There is an audience who wants to enjoy this kind of humour," he explains. "So why can't we give them a different kind of comedy? I'm not going to explain things to the so-called moral police. No one is forcing them to see the film."

Many are known to have inhibitions about acting with Sunny Leone but not Tusshar. He says he respects her as a professional and had no





With Aftab Shivdasani in *Kyaa Kool Hain Hum 3*



With Sunny Leone in *Mastizaade*

“ WHETHER YOU ARE SUNNY LEONE OR A STAR KID, IF YOU ARRIVE WITH A LOT OF HYPE, PEOPLE WILL TRY TO PULL YOU DOWN. BUT ONCE YOU’VE PROVED YOURSELF, IT DOESN’T MATTER ”

qualms about working with the actor who belonged to the adult film industry. He claims, “I was fond of Sunny right from the *Shootout at Waddala* days when we filmed the *Laila* song together. In fact, I suggested her name to my sister Ekta Kapoor and director Sanjay Gupta. I always believed she would become popular here. I guess, the Indian audience is the most liberal. They accept anyone who’s good on screen. People will always try to pull you down. It is human nature. Whether you are Sunny Leone or a star kid. If you arrive with a lot of hype, people will try to pull you down. But once you’ve proved

yourself, it doesn’t matter.”

Ask him whether he’s satisfied with the kind of roles he’s been getting and he replies in the negative. “No actor will ever say he’s satisfied. But I am doing a film after this called *Chicago Junction*, which is different from the adult genre. It’s a period film depicting the ’70s era in UP. It’s a gangster drama directed by Kabir Kaushik.”

Every star has his or her share of bad press and Tusshar too isn’t impervious to that. One charge that people constantly make against him is that he only made it because of his family, particularly his sister and head of Balaji Motion Pictures Ekta Kapoor. Tusshar debunks that allegation. A frown perches his eyebrows as he says, “I am self-made. I started off with an outside banner (Vashu Bhagnani’s *Mujhe Kuch Kehna Hai*). I’ve only done *Kyaa Kool Hain Hum* with my sister. Otherwise, it’s all been my effort. Nobody is helping anyone out here.”

He’s however quick to mention that he shares a close relationship with his sister. He smiles, “We are friends. We discuss work, life, people, we discuss the good, the bad. We advise each other. She’s caring and interested in the kind of work that I do.” He admires her for her professionalism, for her go-getter attitude. Says he, “She is a passionate and dynamic producer. She’s an aggressive marketer. She has set an example and a benchmark for

movie marketing. There are few women who can be compared to her.”

There have been stories about her volatile temper. But Tusshar defends her saying that while Ekta maybe a hard taskmaster, she’s composed outside work. “Probably, she got success at a young age. That time the pressure on her was too much and she was in her early 20s. She was working around the clock doing daily serials. But now she devotes more time to herself, friends, travelling... She’s matured and calmed down a lot.” His sister has taught him many things, he says. He admires her ability to call a spade a spade. “She doesn’t mince words. She will say point blank, ‘This is not the right way. You have to change it, I don’t care’. Such clarity and command is required in this profession. It’s important to say ‘No’!”

Coming back to him, his career has seen a fair share of ups and downs but he has no regrets. He claims he has got his due. “I’ve got my due. I’ve got love from the audience and from the industry. Yes, there are miles to go before I sleep but so far it’s been good.” He gets philosophical and says life has taught him to be positive always. “You’ve got to accept the twists and the turns that life brings. You’ve got to be ready for shocks and surprises. All we can do is try our best. No point worrying about things not in your control. That’s the biggest lesson I’ve learnt.” He adds, “The industry has also taught me that nothing is permanent.” Well said. ■



PHOTOGRAPHS: MEETESH TANEJA
STYLING: ISHA BHANSALI
LOCATION: NOM NOM, ANDHERI (WEST)

“I don’t mind having an IVF baby”

Swara Bhaskar speaks on issues less discussed – the casting couch, married men, and single motherhood. **Suman Sharma** listens in

You don't need questions when you interview Swara Bhaskar. Because she's a natural talker, who zooms off from one topic to the other. All that energy is infectious. So is her smile. She's a naturally gifted actor and ideally one should be seeing more of her on screen. Ideally... but we don't live in an ideal world. Last you saw her was as Salman Khan's sister in *Prem Ratan Dhan Payo* (PRDP). She may not have got the meatiest of roles there but she still held your interest. She must be frustrated for sure for getting only character roles but doesn't let it show. Playing firmly on the front foot, she tosses your query out for a six and proudly claims no other actor has the courage to do the roles that she has

done. "I took up playing Salman's sister in PRDP, a role that was refused by many actresses. In *Nil Battey Sannata*, I play the role of a maid, a mother of a 15 year-old girl. I also anchor the show *Rangoli* on Doordarshan."

Swara was nervous to work with Salman for the first time. Contrary to what she expected, Salman didn't throw any attitude and went out of his way to make her comfortable. "He is mischievous and naughty. I was anxious on the first day. But he cracked jokes to make me comfortable. He made me laugh even during serious scenes." Sweet! She's got the market covered on playing best friends too, having played Kangana Ranaut's best friend in both *Tanu Weds Manu* and *Tanu Weds Manu Returns* and was Sonam Kapoor's best friend in *PRDP* too. She's Sonam's BFF in real life as well. She asserts Sonam is



With Salman Khan, Sonam Kapoor and Neil Nitin Mukesh in *Prem Ratan Dhan Payo*

“The casting couch exists at all levels. I have heard that men also face this. This is an industry of temptations. It's not just the temptation of sex but also the lure of money, lifestyle, glamour, partying and fame. It's upto you finally”

her only true friend in the industry. She loves Sonam for her forthrightness.

"She speaks whatever comes to her mind. *Woh dil ki bahut saaf hai* (she's clean hearted)." Swara also considers Deepak Dobriyal, Mohammad Zeeshan, Dhanush and director Anand L Rai as friends. Kangana and she should be besties after doing two films together but she isn't too keen to elaborate. "I love her... from a distance. Kangana's is an excellent actress and has a lot of potential. She has a phoenix-like quality and has achieved success through hard work."

Hmm...

Her casualness in faded jeans and T-shirt is disarming. Tell her that and she laughs at the pretence of the industry, which puts a premium on outward appearances. She caustically shares that prospective filmmakers are more concerned whether you have manicured hands than gauging one's talent. "When I went to meet someone in the industry for the first time, I was wearing my best jeans and *kurta*. The person asked me why I was wearing a bed cover. Here, acting is less important than appearances." She believes she's still a misfit here and hasn't been able to understand the workings even after six years. "I don't believe a heroine should have set type of looks or that she should be fair and slim in order to be considered beautiful." She also wryly admits that

the 'casting couch' does exist in the film industry. "People will not ask you directly but drop hints and clues. The casting couch exists at all levels. I have heard that men also face this. This is an industry of temptations. It is not just the temptation of sex, but also the lure of money, the lifestyle, glamour, partying and fame. It's up to you." She observes the industry could chip away at your inner core if you aren't strong enough. "You can lose yourself

ever changing scenario is working hard and keeping a balanced mind. She cautions against letting success go to one's head. "Akshay Kumar once said in an interview that when you are climbing up the ladder, the people you meet on the way will be



With friend Sonam Kapoor



Nili Battey Sannata

“If someone says that Swara Bhaskar is bad in a film, then I get all jittery. Acting is the only thing I know. I don't have a rich father, godfather or anyone else... I have earned this by hard work. And I am paranoid about losing it”

in a variety of ways. You could lose yourself, your interests, your friends and your family."

The actor reiterates the often repeated adage that there is no fixed formula for success and claims it's all a big gamble. The only constant that works in this

right there to watch you when you fall down. That is why you should behave well with everyone."

One thing an actor should guard against is negativity, something that assails all creative people. Says she, "Each actor passes through fear,

SWARA SPELLS OUT HER EXPERIENCES ON LOVE, SEX AUR DHOKHA

LOVE

There is only attraction at first sight. Love grows slowly. It is like a plant that grows gradually. If I like someone I do not hesitate to take the lead. Shah Rukh Khan makes me fall in love, again and again.

SEX

Sex is normal and is an organic part of growing up. It's enjoyable if done with someone you love. One night stands are exciting but mine turned into a three-month relationship, which I couldn't sustain.

DHOKHA

If you are too nice, people don't take you seriously. The industry taught me to be bitchy. My fear of failure keeps me on my toes all the time.

angst and insecurity. This happens with those who are at the top of the film industry or otherwise." Even she was annoyed about not getting work after being appreciated in *Raanjhanaa*. But luckily, she always ends up bagging something worthwhile.

She confides her sole desire is to be recognised as a good actor and she's protective about it to the extreme. She confesses fearing bad reviews. "If someone says that Swara Bhaskar is bad in a film, then I get all jittery. Acting is the only thing I know.



I don't have a rich father, godfather or anyone else. I have managed to acquire important roles where I even get close-ups. I have earned this by hard work. And I am paranoid about losing it."

Like most other actors, she hasn't been linked to anyone famous, even for publicity's sake and she says she likes it that way. She has been in several serious relationships and has gone through heartbreak. She can't forgive and forget easily and hence moving on has been a difficult process for her. She has a tendency towards nurturing hurt as well. But, with time, she has learned to let go of the negative and keep the positive. "I believe that once you love someone, you cannot stop loving them." Quoting Gulzar she adds, "*Haath chhoote to rishte nahin chhoota karte.*"

She asserts she doesn't need a boyfriend to maintain her lifestyle. She wants a guy who believes that the sun shines out of her eyes. She wants emotional pampering and not material gains. One thing she's wary of is being involved with a married guy. "It is painful. It only makes life complicated. It is about hurt and pain, and not morality." She doesn't mind being a single mother though. "I don't mind having a baby through IVF. I'm a family-oriented person. Motherhood is a very beautiful experience in the life of a woman..." says the actor wistfully. ■

Stand up and deliver

SEXY IS HER SYNONYM. BUT ASHWINI DESHMUKH DISCOVERS THAT SUNNY LEONE IS ALL HEART

What happened to Sunny Leone in her publicised and critiqued television interview was fodder for the feminists to quote the ‘hell hath no fury...’ idiom. But in a display of amazing grace she maintained a stoic stance as the TV journalist allegedly grilled her with inappropriate questions and theories. There were no knee jerk reactions or any piercing rebuttals. The interviewee remained composed and took every misplaced allegation in her stride. By her own admission, Sunny was scared when the interview was being conducted. Her biggest fear was that she’d invite wrath of the moralists. Unlike her apprehensions, the Indian public and media turned to support a woman and her dignity in big numbers. Even a superstar like Aamir Khan tweeted to tell Sunny he’d love to work with her. It made her day! Most importantly it affirmed faith in public perception. It didn’t matter that she was an adult movie icon before she made her mark in Hindi films. Read on to find out her fears, her resolve and her confidence...

You've dabbled with many interests – from hockey to being trained as a paediatric nurse. What were your growing years like?

I grew up in a typical Punjabi home. From Sunday to Thursday, my mother prepared Punjabi food—*sabzi, roti, rice and daal*. Only on weekends we could have meat, like chicken curry or pizza and pasta. We were a family that ate at 7:30 pm. All four of us. My father and mother loved to cook. My brother and I visited the Gurudwara and did *keertan* every Sunday. I played sports. We moved to California from Ontario, Canada when I was 14. It was devastating to leave my friends. I went through a difficult teenage. But by 18, I grew into my own. I wanted to be independent, live on my own, buy my own car...

Were you a rebel?

I was definitely a rebel. My parents raised me to be independent. But with that came things, which my parents didn't want me to do. They wanted their little girl to stay a little girl forever. But I did my own thing.

—66—
I don't have family. My family in India has decided that they don't want to see me. I tried meeting them once when I was close to Punjab. But they wanted nothing to do with me. It was a 'closure moment'
 —99—

The more they pushed me not to do something, the more I went in the opposite direction.

What was their reaction to you joining the adult industry?

When you enter this line of work, you don't consult your parents. No parent would give their blessings. Any parent would say, 'I'm locking you in your room, and you're never going to leave.' But I thought before the aunties and uncles start gossiping about their '*beti*', I told my parents about it. They were naturally upset; my father didn't show it as much as my mother did. We had a couple of heated discussions. But they had raised someone so independent that they knew they couldn't convince me out of it. Their main concern was that I remain healthy and safe. They just accepted it, I was their only daughter. I still wanted to come home, see them, eat with them... so we didn't talk about the situation.

I was still the goofy nerdy girl, who walked around the house with messed up hair.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JOY DUTTA

In retrospect does it pinch you somewhere that you upset your parents?

No child ever wants to feel that they've hurt their parents. But at the same time I wasn't living my life for my parents, I was living my life for myself. Yes, I'd probably hurt their feelings, I'd probably taken the path they didn't want me to. But it was my decision.

What about your extended family?

I don't have family. My family in India has decided they don't want to see me. I tried meeting them once when I was close to Punjab but they wanted nothing to do with me. It was a 'closure moment'. My family in the US would meet me because I was my father's daughter. But I don't have a relationship with anyone. So it's just my brother, my husband Daniel (Weber) and his parents and his family. They are closer to me than my own flesh and blood.

Had your parents been alive what would they have said seeing you today?

(Teary-eyed) I hope they'd be proud of me. I would've brought them to India and made them stay with me. I do ask for their blessings at the beginning of every project.

Your recent interview on TV was conducted in bad taste. You must have gone through similar experiences even with industry folks in the past...

I'm used to dealing with hatred and curious people. But I've never had a co-star who's misbehaved or said anything inappropriate, I feel lucky. Similarly with filmmakers. They understand their boundaries because they want to work with you. Regarding the TV interview, the questions were not what ticked off people; it was the manner in which they were asked. I'm a woman; I'm not going to yell at a man, ever. Women shouldn't. Controlling emotions and having patience is something I've learnt. But I do believe he came with his own agenda.

What has this incident taught you?

There are more supportive people out there than I thought. Feeling alone, feeling like an outsider, is never nice. The weird situations and interviews have helped me become strong. Even in the past, I've faced situations. Like you're the elephant in the room. During one of the first award shows I attended; no one wanted to go on stage with me. But maybe it'll be different after



— 66 —
During one of the first award shows I attended, no one wanted to go on stage with me.

People wanted nothing to do with me. That is still there

— 67 —

this. People wanted nothing to do with me. That is still there. I want to tell them, 'Hi! I'm a normal person, I swear I am. I'm just like you!' That's why I don't go out too often because even though I say that I don't care, I'm human. I don't want to put myself out there. Why not protect yourself instead?

What was going on in your mind during the interview?

I never felt that I was going to cry or be upset because I'm not apologetic, which is what maybe he wanted me to be. A respected senior journalist was interviewing me. People were going to take it exactly how he put it, painting this horrible picture of me. I was scared. But when my fans and certain celebrities started responding, I realised I hadn't gone wrong. Some people called it a publicity stunt and



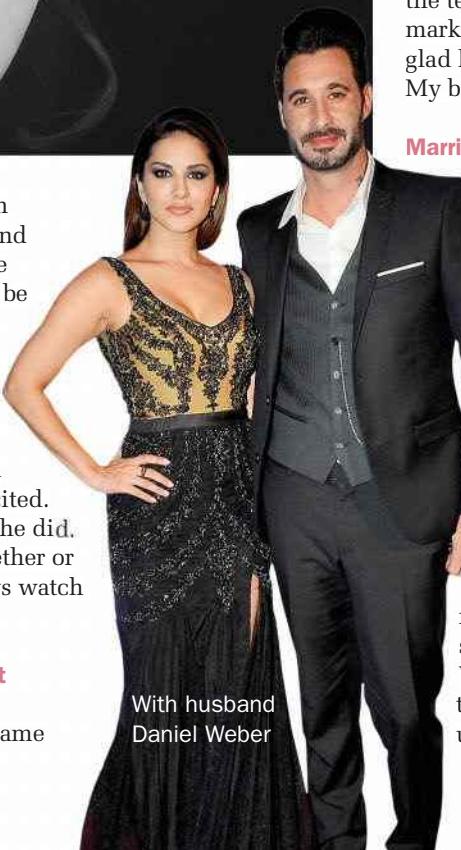
I freaked out. Nobody wants to do an interview like that. I'm glad it's behind me. Seeing the interview, even if one young lady says, 'Okay, I'm going to be stronger' then it's cool.

You must've been thrilled when Aamir Khan tweeted in your support.

I was sitting in my car then. I began jumping up and down. I was so excited. I wasn't expecting him to say what he did. I was elated. Whether we work together or not, I'll always be his fan. I'll always watch his movies, I'll always respect him.

Four years in B-town. What makes it worthwhile?

What makes it worth it is where I came



With husband
Daniel Weber

from. When I met my husband Daniel eight years ago and started our own company, we had no money. We started this production house together with credit cards. Being in the adult industry you never imagine you're ever going to cross over. I had worked with the best. Career wise, I had reached a plateau, there wasn't any higher I could go. So when *Bigg Boss* was offered, I took the leap of faith. My husband said, "Girl, we're going. Let's just do it. Grab the bull by its horns." So much has happened ever since.

How important is your husband's role in your life?

My husband is my world. He allows me to be Sunny Leone. My mother passed away within three months of me meeting him. God took away my mother but he gave me Daniel. Daniel took care of my father too. He was the only person who made sure I was okay after my parents passed away. He's my angel.

You must be enjoying his protectiveness...

As we grow older every woman wants a guy who's going to treat her like she's the only one, put her on a pedestal. I'm not talking about monetary things but about love and caring. Most important is respect for each other. Daniel is confident about me. Although, I'm sure there are moments when the testosterone kicks in and he wants to mark his territory and say 'she's mine.' I'm glad he does that as well. I feel fortunate. My best friend is my husband.

Marriage seems to have clearly worked for you...

Marriage is one of the most beautiful things that's ever happened to me. Someone giving you a hug, someone telling you that he loves you, someone to confide in or ask for advice... for me it's just Daniel, nobody else.

What do you enjoy doing with him?

Something we make sure we do every single morning is that we cook and have breakfast together. My favourite time is making breakfast. At night, I make sure we talk about our day. (Laughs) We get frustrated when we're not together than when we're together, unlike many other couples.



“I've become fearless as a filmmaker. I wouldn't like to piggybank on someone else's stardom. I don't want my film to open only because it has a superstar. The script and the story are the most important things”

The better half

Divya Khosla Kumar believes in making her own music. Ushnata Paul meets the industry wife with a difference

Divya Khosla Kumar, slowly but surely, has carved her distinct identity. As wife of bigshot producer and music baron, Bhushan Kumar of T-Series, life could have been a song. But the gritty girl chose to answer her inner calling and chalk her own path. The model-turned-actress debuted a decade ago when she romanced Akshay Kumar in *Ab Tumhare Hawale Watan Sathiyo*. After marriage to Bhushan Kumar, it was assumed that she'd move away from the camera.

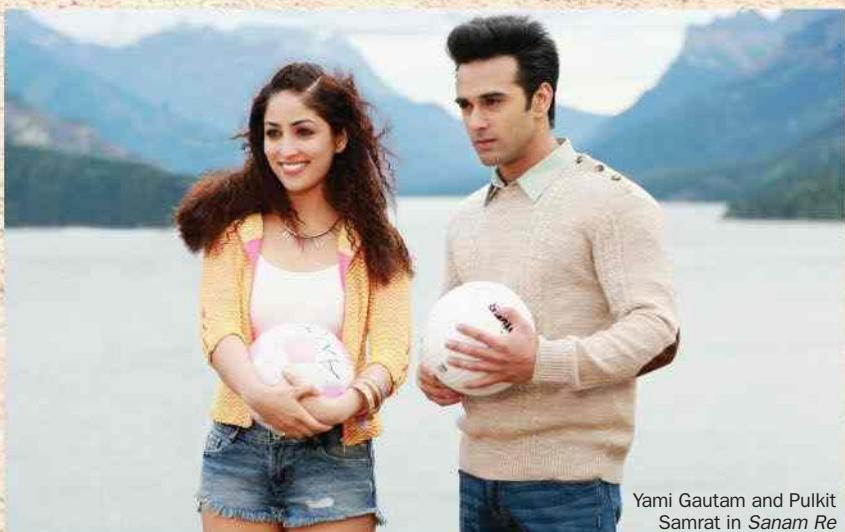
But she left all pleasantly surprised when she chose to direct the campus romcom *Yaariyan* in 2014 and found success in her first attempt. She then followed it up with *Sanam Re*, starring the hotshot pair Pulkit Samrat and Yami Gautam and is glad with the response it received. "For me filmmaking isn't about making money. By God's grace I've all the comforts. I challenge myself and work hard only because of my love for cinema," she smiles. Divya insists that direction is a difficult process. "There's no fixed formula for success. Direction is a creative but stressful procedure, especially if it's also your own production," she says. "The movie answered a lot of questions about love and finding your own happiness. There was a line in it, '*Bade sheheron mein shayad isi liye itna shor hota hain taaki koi apne dil ki awaaz*'

sun na paye'. We're so consumed by existence that we fail to hear the voice of our heart. The film was about finding your soulmate. It made you question whether love is about exchanging cards, holding hands or is it deeper than that? Or whether it's predestined?" she says about *Sanam Re* in which she even choreographed the songs.

She claims she banked on her own talent and made her debut movie with a bunch of newcomers. Here too, Pulkit and Yami were relatively fresh. "I've become fearless as a filmmaker. I wouldn't like to piggybank on someone else's stardom. The script and the story are the most important things. I don't want my film to open only because it has a superstar." She explains how she worked

around her characters. "I had to make Yami appear fresh because hers was the face of a fairness endorsement and it was splashed all across. Her character traverses the spectrum, from that of a 16-year-old to a 30-year-old. I cast Pulkit because there's a certain sadness in his eyes. He played the guy who's stuck in a rut and discovers happiness eventually. In fact, he goes around saying, 'Divya cast me saying, 'Mujhe tumhari aankhon mein udaasi dikhti hain. Poora saal aise hi udaas rehna (I see sadness in your eyes. Stay this way all year through)!''"

She rubbishes rumours that Pulkit and Yami's supposed affair was a way of garnering publicity for the film. "If I could take a risk with five newcomers in *Yaariyan*, then why



Yami Gautam and Pulkit Samrat in *Sanam Re*



With husband Bhushan Kumar and son Ruhaan

“My son Ruhaan’s first words were ‘action’ and ‘cut’ instead of ‘Mama’ and ‘Papa’. The positivity that children bring... they are like angels, they help you become better human beings”

would I do this for publicity with my second movie? That's not my agenda. In fact, a television channel approached us suggesting that we play up the lead pair's alleged affair as it would give the required footage to the movie. But I put my foot down. I didn't want this kind of a publicity stunt,” she says.

Divya shares an interesting incident from the film set. “Rishiji (Kapoor) did a special appearance where he played a 60, 70 and eventually an 80-year-old. Considering he has been a superstar, I was amazed to see his passion and energy. When we were shooting in Shimla for a 9am shift, he reached the set at 7am. I was in my hotel room when he called and said, ‘Yahan toh dressman bhi nahi ayaa hai!’ His hunger for work amazed me. He asked a lot of questions as an actor. I find that encouraging as a director because that only helps in making a scene better. I enjoyed working with him,” she says.

Divya was even seen shaking a leg in *Humne pee rakhi hai* (composed by Epic Bhangra) in *Sanam Re*.

“Ganesh Acharya choreographed the song. I rehearsed only for a week! But I worked on my body for two months. I'm a fitness freak and I've been working out for the last 16 years. I almost developed four-pack abs. That's great because I'm a mother of a four-year-old,” she smiles adding, “Women shouldn't shy away from having children. They fear it's a big responsibility and it can affect their body, skin or hair. But if you work out and discipline yourself nothing is going to change.”

She balances her schedule around her son Ruhaan. “When the film is in the writing stage, I arrange all the discussions at home. When the film is in the shooting stage, I take along Ruhaan to the set. He enjoyed a lot on the *Sanam Re* set. Sometimes he'd say ‘action’ or try to imitate the actors,” she laughs. “In fact, Ruhaan's first words were ‘action’ and ‘cut’ instead of ‘Mama’ and ‘Papa’,” she confides. “The



With the crew of *Sanam Re*

positivity that children bring... they are like angels, they help you become better human beings.”

Hers has been a life less ordinary. Her journey began when she started modelling in Delhi before coming to Mumbai. “I did a few music videos and commercials in Mumbai when I was spotted by director Anil Sharma for *Ab Tumhare...* Later, as destiny would have it, I got married to Bhushan,” she smiles. She shares that she first met Bhushan at Anil Sharma's house. “Cupid didn't strike instantly. We met a few more times. Maybe it was destined. *Sanam Re* has a bit of my life.”

After marriage she began learning editing and cinematography and directed music videos for singers Agam Nigam, Jermaine Jackson, Tulsi Kumar. “Life took me on a different route,” she states. But all the glory and luxuries have not influenced her basic sensibilities. “I come from a conservative family. My parents never imagined sending their daughter to Mumbai. I didn't know a single soul here. I stayed as a paying guest and travelled in local



On the Sanam Re set



With Rishi Kapoor



At the monitor

“I come from a conservative family. My parents never imagined sending their daughter to Mumbai. I didn’t know a single soul here. I stayed as a paying guest and travelled in local trains. It was a long struggle”

trains. It was a long struggle,” she shares. “I’m still a middle class girl at heart. I never forget to switch off the fan and lights. I inculcate the same values in my child. If I begin taking all this opulence seriously, that will be the end of me. What’s more important is to be a good human being.” She reveals that husband Bhushan too is a simple soul. “He doesn’t work just for money. He works to keep his father’s (the late Gulshan Kumar) brand alive. He’s down to earth and has no airs about him. He’s a great father to Ruhaan.”

Divya says she never wanted to be a typical industry wife. “I’m not the kind who will wear pretty clothes and go for lunches and kitty parties. I’ve always been creatively inclined. There is no substitute for

hard work. It took me eight years to convince Bhushan about my first film! If you have the willpower and are passionate enough, then you can convince anybody. I got five offers from other banners after *Yaariyan*. I could have got into joint ventures but I can’t leave T-Series. Bhushan wouldn’t be happy.” She adds that Bhushan takes his role as a producer seriously and never visits the set. Though she values his opinion. “Both of us are passionate about our work. If you’re in a powerful position then you can help many people. In *Yaariyan* I launched five newcomers. Even Bhushan has given breaks to new musicians. He’s responsible for picking Amaal Malik up and polishing him. *Sooraj dooba hai* from *Roy*, which won many awards this year, was initially

rejected by many producers. But when Bhushan heard the raw tune he suggested the right elements that could blend with it. He has a keen sense of music. He also encouraged Himesh Reshammiya, Pritam, Adnan Sami and Yo Yo Honey Singh. Right now, it’s Amaal for him,” she says.

As for herself, though she’s fortunate to have a friend, philosopher and guide in her husband, she insists that talent and creativity is what takes you ahead. She smiles, “Bhushan can produce my film but he can’t make it a success. If you’re talented, the world is a stage for you. I’ve grown as a person, polished my talent and I’m working on my own terms and conditions while retaining my morals and values.” ■

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The poignant beauty of Kashmir, the yearning of love... director **ABHISHEK KAPOOR** tells **RACHIT GUPTA** why *Fitoor* has been his magnificent obsession

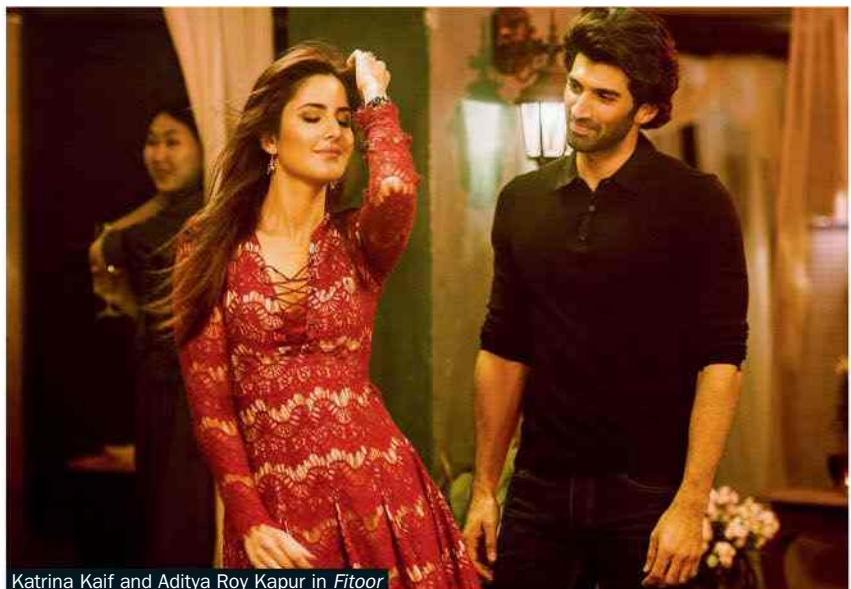
From Rekha walking out of the production, speculation that the Ranbir Kapoor-Katrina Kaif break up is a publicity stunt fuelled to create curiosity around the female lead to the passion between the lead pair Aditya Roy Kapur-Katrina – *Fitoor* grabbed headlines from the word go. But the disposition of its maker is unlike the mania surrounding the film. Director Abhishek Kapoor is as composed as MS Dhoni on the cricket field. In a matter of fact tone he says, “No film is easy to release, make, or promote. They all come with their own baggage because there’s no point too far for your film to go. If you believe the film has become so popular that the whole world wants to watch it, you’ll want to go further and have people on the moon watch it as well. Every day is a struggle and every single moment is filled with heightened levels of aspiration.”

Reportedly, *Fitoor* is an adaptation of Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*, a 150-year-old story of love and intrigue, and the expectations have skyrocketed with all the publicity around the film. “I was worried when Rekhaji decided to leave the project. But I also strongly believe what has to happen will happen. As a filmmaker,

it’s my responsibility to get the film made. So you figure a way out. When Rekhaji left, I’d already shot 50 days of my film. Thankfully, I’d just shot with her for two days so there wasn’t much we had to change.” As fate would have it, the stunning Tabu came to his rescue. “Tabu was

actually the first actor I thought of when I began writing the script three years ago. But we had a change of heart and Rekhaji came in. But then she chose to step out and Tabu was back in. As they say, *dane dane pe likha hai khane wale ka naam*. The rest lies with audience reactions after

“KATRINA IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN THE WORLD. HER CHARACTER OF FIRDAUS IS AN ‘ASPIRATIONAL’ FIGURE. SHE’S ENIGMATIC AND SOMEONE YOU CAN’T PUT A FINGER ON”



Katrina Kaif and Aditya Roy Kapur in *Fitoor*



PHOTOGRAPHS: SOUMYAJIT NANDY

the release." Incidentally, Tabu plays the reclusive Begum Hazrat based on Dickens' Miss Havisham.

He confides that casting for his films has always been a dicey proposition. "The process of casting has been a hit and miss situation. It happened with *Rock On!!* It happened with *Kai Po Che* and *Fitoor* has been no different." He asserts that he lets his actors have their way. "I am clear about the roles I write. But when an actor steps in they have to make that part their own. There's a transition process, which then

'aspirational' figure. She's enigmatic and someone you can't put a finger on. Katrina had that going with her personality."

Three years in the making, *Fitoor* was pulled up for being a tough production with rising costs. Abhishek explains, "Big budgets and escalating production costs are never a challenge. The understanding of the script, making sure that people enjoy it irrespective of the cost of bringing it to life, is what matters. People don't care how much money was spent making a film; they care about what they take home from it. They should feel that they've got their money's worth. The story, the message and

"TABU WAS ACTUALLY THE FIRST ACTOR I THOUGHT OF WHEN I BEGAN WRITING THE SCRIPT THREE YEARS AGO. BUT WE HAD A CHANGE OF HEART AND REKHAJI CAME IN. BUT THEN SHE CHOSE TO STEP OUT AND TABU WAS BACK IN"



Aditya Roy Kapur, Rekha, Abhishek Kapoor and Katrina Kaif in a promotional still for *Fitoor*

brings in the hit-and-miss scenario." Even Aditya Roy Kapur wasn't the first choice. "Earlier we had Sushant (Singh Rajput) but for some reason he couldn't do it. Aditya has an inherent innocence. That's what I needed for Noor, a boy obsessed with his love. He's also handsome and looks like a Kashmiri." He feels confident about Aditya's prospects. "His potential as an actor hasn't been tapped into much so there's a sense of purity in his performance." He assures the idea behind casting Katrina Kaif was not just her star value. "Katrina is one of the most beautiful women in the world. Her character of Firdaus is an

REKHA OUT... TABU IN!



Rekha was announced as part of the cast in mid 2014 and she left the project in May 2015. It was speculated that Rekha was not happy with the way her character of the aging Begum had been fleshed out. Tabu was roped in to portray the character inspired by Miss Havisham from *Great Expectations*.

just the experience of the film should linger in their minds."

He maintains that the popularity of one of Dickens' most read novels had nothing to do with his choice of making the film. "I'm not making the film because of its popularity as a book. I took this up because I believed I had something to contribute in the telling of this tale and add value to it. I guess I've a deeper understanding of what the characters in the novel go through." He enjoys the challenge of working with complex subjects. "Generally, I gravitate towards something that at first intimidates me. The question 'how are we going to do it' is



exciting. The kick is that I'm going to end up learning something new." He also doesn't like to repeat genres. "I hadn't tackled a love story before. The idea is to not repeat myself."

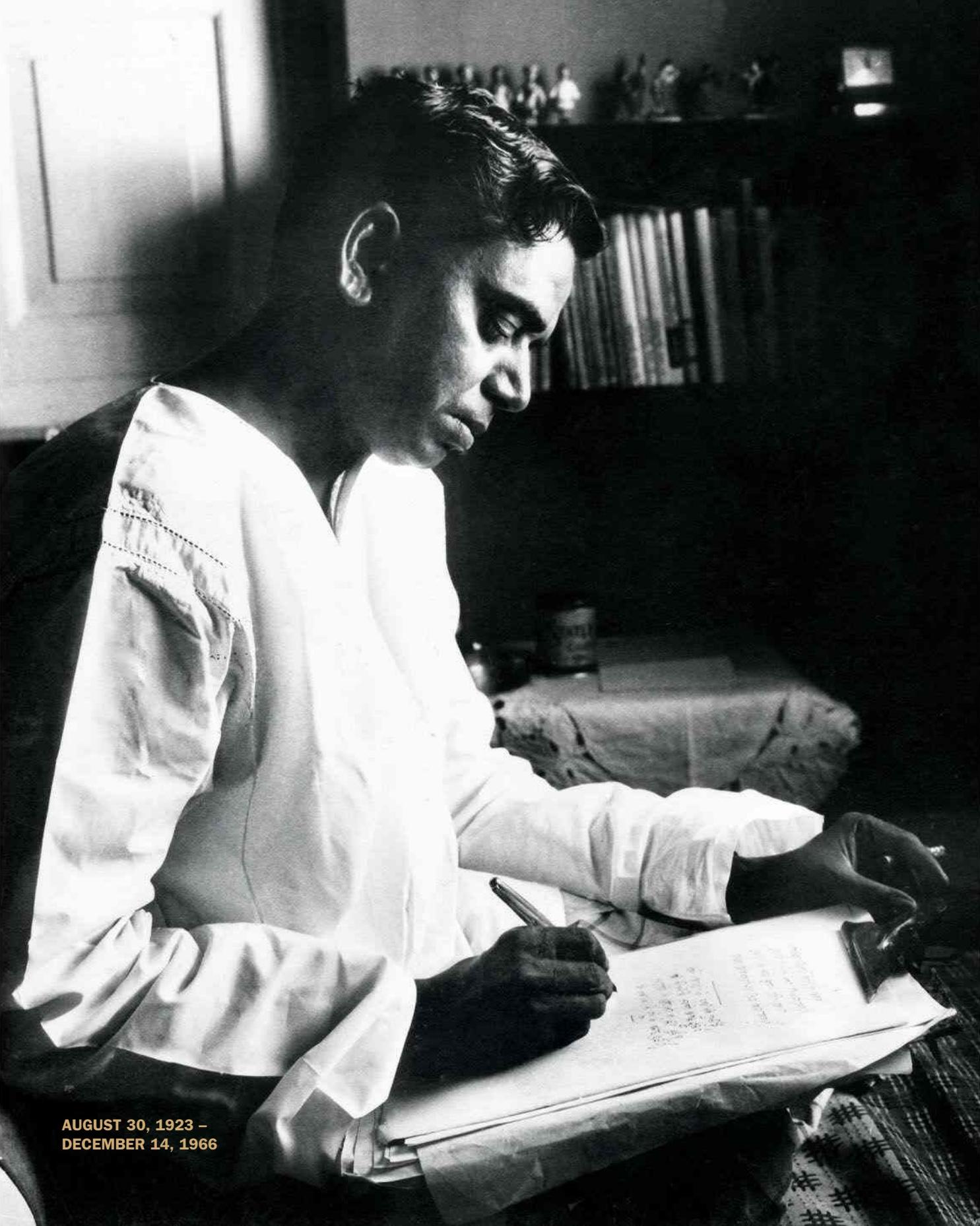
Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haider* may have renewed the interest of filmmakers in Kashmir as a location, but Abhishek's motives of choosing the valley were different. "Kashmir has a timelessness about it. It's the most beautiful place I've seen. All the romantic films that I watched as a child were based in Kashmir. But for a decade or two, no one shot there, people diverted to locations

like Manali and Switzerland. But these alternate places did not have the romance of Kashmir. *Fitoor* is a childhood romance and the boy is trapped in that time. The impact of the love that he experiences for this girl is encapsulated in that time. The only place that could do justice to these feelings was Kashmir."

There's also a lot of curiosity around the red hair adorned by Katrina and Tabu in his film. He attributes it to the Chinar trees of Kashmir. "It's metaphorical. Everything is not literal in the film. The women have coloured hair because they're meant to be enchanting. Women with that kind of hair could weave a web and make

you fall for it. They can entrance you. As a filmmaker you try to relate it to the swaying charm of the Chinar trees, making Kashmir all the more relevant to the story."

He claims he doesn't have great expectations around the performance of his film. He just wants the people to go home satisfied. "The figure of 100 crores is not my benchmark for success. I do hope my film makes money and that my investors get their money back *aur jo thodi bahut izzat hai woh barkarar rahe*. I'll be happy with that outcome. People still talk about *Rock On!!* and *Kai Po Che*. I hope *Fitoor* can also find place on the same shelf." ■



AUGUST 30, 1923 –
DECEMBER 14, 1966

Guide to POETRY

DEVESH SHARMA PROFILES SHAILENDRA, THE LYRICIST WHO WOVE PROFOUND EMOTIONS OUT OF SIMPLE WORDS

Hindi film lyrics – thanks to stalwarts like Sahir Ludhianvi, Kaifi Azmi, Majrooh Sultanpuri and others of their ilk, who dipped their ink in Urdu and Persian – was written in a language not commonly used by the masses. It was Shailendra who broke this practice and brought Hindi, or rather Hindustani, to the forefront. He utilised everyday imagery instead. Sample this – *Kisi ki muskurahaton pe ho nisar, kisi ka dard mil sake to le udhar, kisi ke vaaste ho tere dil mein pyar* – these simple lines from the film *Anari* (1959) tell you how to live a meaningful life. He was known to be a simple man, who lent a helping hand to others without expecting anything in return.

MELODIES WITH RK

For this people's poet, who wrote firebrand poetry for IPTA while working as a welder in the railways workshop, selling his craft to cinema was something of an anathema. It's believed that Raj Kapoor caught him reciting *Jalta hai Punjab* – his poem on the Partition of India during a *mushaira* and offered him a place on his writing team, which he then refused. However, complications in his wife's pregnancy made him accept the Showman's offer. He's said to have written two songs for RK Productions' first film, *Barsaat*



Shailendra with mentor Raj Kapoor

It was Shankar-Jaikishan with whom Shailendra gave his best work. With their collaboration, he won his three Filmfare Awards

(1949) – *Barsaat mein* and *Patli kamar hai*. Both proved to be superhits and a lifelong friendship between Raj Kapoor, composers Shankar-Jaikishan, and the other lyricist in Raj Kapoor's camp, Hasrat Jaipuri, was forged. He went on to write the iconic title song *Awara hoon* (*Awara* 1951), which got worldwide popularity and was even translated into Russian.

It was Shankar-Jaikishan with

whom he gave his best work, and with their collaboration he won three Filmfare Awards – for *Yeh mera deewanapan hai* (*Yahudi* 1958), *Sab kuch seekha humne* (*Anari* 1959) and almost a decade later for *Main gaoon tum so jao* (*Brahmachari* 1968) – awarded posthumously two years after his death. According to filmlore, Shankar-Jaikishan used to work separately, though they were credited jointly in films. Apparently, Shankar preferred Shailendra while Jaikishan favoured Hasrat Jaipuri. The team worked their magic for RK banner in evergreen songs like *Pyar hua iqar hua hai*, *Mud mud ke na dekh* (*Shri 420*, 1955) – said to be written when Shailendra caught Shankar admiring a young girl, *Nanhe munne bacche teri mutthi mei n kya hai* (*Boot Polish*, 1953), *Yeh raat bheegi bheegi* (*Chori Chori*, 1956), *Dost dost na raha* (*Sangam*, 1964) – mirroring perhaps his own state of mind those days.

DIFFERNT STROKES

While the RK banner brought out Shailendra's socialist-nationalistic ethos – *Mera joota hai japani.... phir bhi dil hai Hindustani* (*Shri 420*, 1955), it was while working with SJ for other banners that made Shailendra write on different subjects. In *Daag* (1952), he gave both Dilip Kumar and Talat



Shailendra with poets Sahir Ludhianvi, Bharat Vyas and Pradeep

In Daag (1952), Shailendra gave both Dilip Kumar and Talat Mehmood one of the finest ghazals of their careers – Ae mere dil kahin aur chal



With literary friends Onkarnath Srivastav, Phanishwarnath Renu, Dharmveer Bharti, Vrajendra Gaur and others



With Pandit Nehru, Madan Mohan, Jaikishan, actors David and Jairaj

Mehmood one of the finest ghazals of their careers – *Ae mere dil kahin aur chal*. Talat excelled in another ghazal – *Andhe jahan ke andhe raaste* (*Patita* 1953). With these, Shailendra silenced those who believed he couldn't take to the ghazal form. *Tu pyaar ka sagar hai*, his *bhajan* from (*Seema* 1955) is still sung in schools, *Sur na saje* (*Basant Bahar*, 1956) brought out the fact that he could write to the classical metre, while songs like *Arre bhai nikal ke aa ghar se*, *Nakhrewali* (*New Delhi* 1956), proved he could write light verses. *Chahe koi mujhe junglee kahe* (*Junglee* 1961) spoke of the madness of love while *Ajeeb dastan hai yeh* (*Dil Apna Aur Preet Parayi*, 1960) spoke about its unrequited side. Like all creative people, there

were differences between Shailendra and SJ. On one such occasion SJ chose to work with another lyricist. When Shailendra got to know about it he wrote *Choti si yeh duniya, pehchane raaste hain, tum kahin to miloge, kabhi to miloge, to poochenge haal*. Later, when they patched up, SJ magnanimously used it *Rangoli* (1962).

Shailendra too had great attachment for Salil Chaudhary and the duo produced such gems as *Chota sa ghar hoga* (*Naukari* 1954), *Zindagi khawab hai* (*Jaagte Raho*, 1956) and *Munna bada pyara* (*Musafir*, 1957). *Madhumati* (1958) formed the pinnacle of their partnership. Both caught the essence of Bimal Roy's haunting tale with such compositions as *Dil*

tadap tadap ke keh raha hai aa bhi jaa, Suhana safar aur yeh mausam haseen, Aaja re pardesi and the folk based *Chad gayo paapi bichua*.

BONG CONNECTION

The other Bengali composer with whom he formed an enduring partnership was SD Burman. Shailendra wrote an imagery filled *bhajan*, *Shivji bihane chale* for Dada Burman in *Munimji* (1955) and a more sombre one in *Na main dhan chaoon* (*Kala Bazar* – 1960). The film also has him writing one of the best love ballads – *Khoya khoya chand*. Dada Burman composed mostly on folk and classical words and he matched the maestro's musings in both *Bandini* (1963) and



On the set of *Teesri Kasam* with Raj Kapoor



With Lata Mangeshkar

SHAILENDRA'S TOP SONGS



② Pyar hua iqrar hua hai – SHRI 420



① Tere mere sapne – GUIDE



④ Dost dost na raha – SANGAM



⑤ Sajan re jhoot mat bolo – TEESRI KASAM

His production Teesri Kasam (1966) took five long years in the making. The delay took a toll on Shailendra's health, not to mention his finances

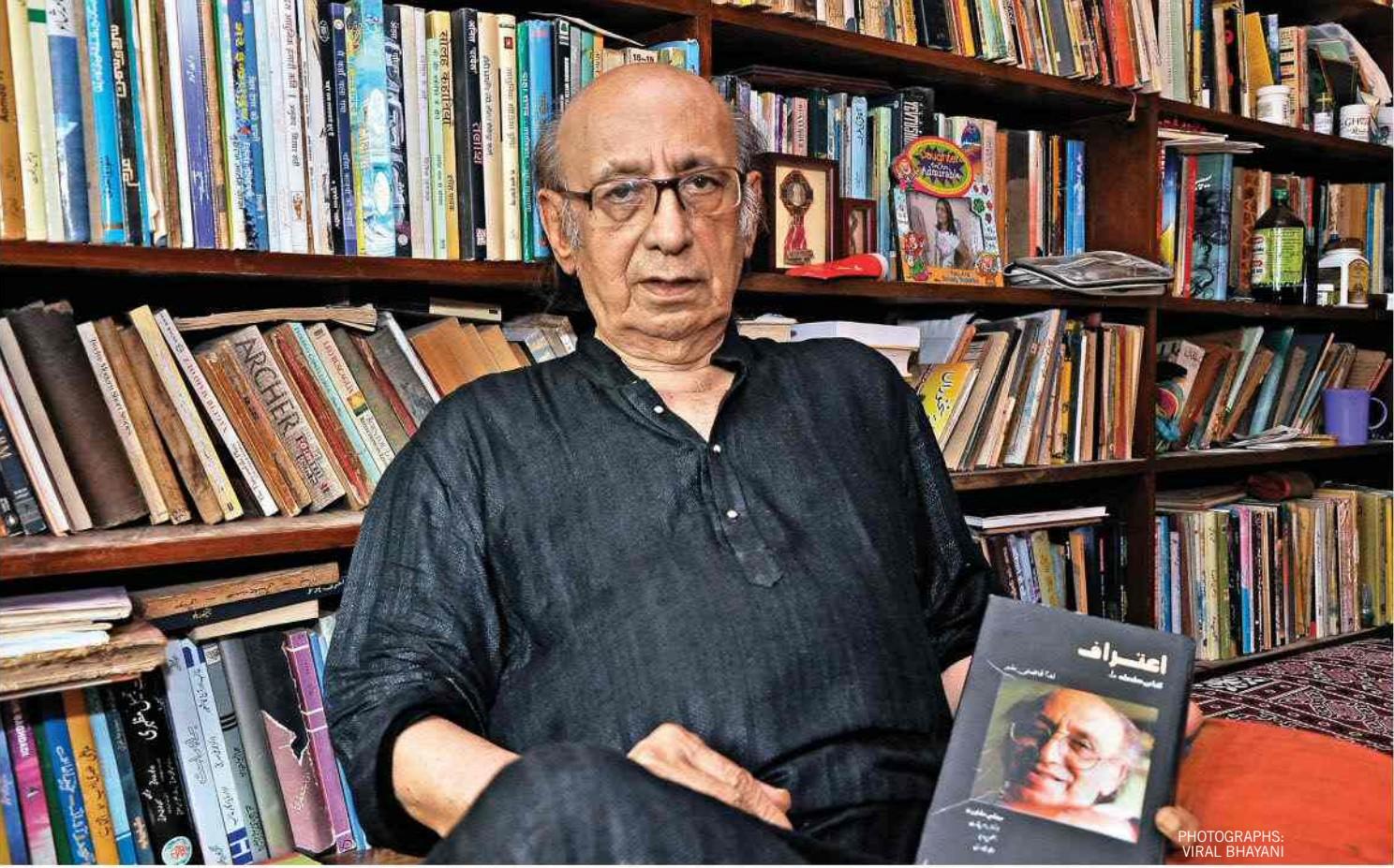
Meri Soorat Teri Ankhon (1963). *Guide* (1965) can be said to be their finest work together. It's rumoured that Shailendra was miffed at not being the first choice of Dev Anand and Dada Burman for the film and demanded an astronomical sum for the songs. But whatever he wrote was worth its weight in gold as he caught both Raju's (Dev Anand) fall and redemption and Rosie's (Waheeda Rehman) dilemma admirably through his lyrics. The film would be soulless without such songs as *Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai*, *Wahan kaun hai tera*, *Gaata*

rahe mera dil, *Din dhal jaaye*, *Piya toh se*, *Tere mere sapne* and the rain song, *Allah megh de...*

DREAMS & DUST

He loved the writings of Phanishwar Nath Renu, whose short story, *Maare Gaye Ghulfam*, Shailendra wanted to bring to celluloid. This desire proved to be his undoing. This film, *Teesri Kasam* (1966), took five long years in the making. The delay took toll on his health, not to mention his finances. He found his so-called friends shrinking

away when the film didn't do well at the box-office. Ironically, it contains some of his finest folk based poetry – *Sajan re jhoot mat bolo*, *Chalat musafir moh liya re*, *Paan khaye saiyan hamaro* – are still remembered today. The film won the President's Gold Medal for best feature film that year and is considered a classic today, with Raj Kapoor and Waheeda Rahman winning plaudits. Shailendra, reportedly, took to drinking heavily afterwards. Depression as well deteriorating health all took their toll and he passed away on December 14, 1966 at just 45... He was in the process of writing *Jeena yahan marna yahan* for Raj Kapoor during his last days and perhaps that's the best epitaph for him... ■



PHOTOGRAPHS:
VIRAL BHAYANI

KABHI KISIKO MUQAMMAL JAHAN NAHIN MILTA....

Renowned poet/lyricist **Nida Fazli**, 78, passed away on February 8, 2016. Filmfare pays him a tribute by reproducing excerpts from his earlier interview

“*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*”

The late author/ writer/ poet Muqtida Hasan Nida Fazli thus summed up his nonconformist literary journey in the lines from Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken*. Though not a prolific film lyricist, the poignant beauty of

his poetry won merit amidst mediocrity. What better idiom can intoxication find than in *Hosh walon ko khabar kya* (*Sarfarosh*)? Who can remain unyielding to love as in *Tu iss tarah se meri zindagi mein shaamil hai* (*Aap Toh Aise Na The*)... or remain unmoved by

the existential angst in *Kabhi kisi ko muqammil jahan nahin milta* (*Ahista Ahista*)... or fail to find epiphany in *Apni marzi se kahan apne safar ke hum hain* (TV serial *Sailaab*)? The mysticism of Bhakti poets, the surrealism of Sufi thought, the existentialism of TS Eliot

and European writers, the Marxist leanings of Russia and free India... Fazli was a sum of many parts.

BHAKTI OF LOVE

Born on October 12, 1938, the Gwalior-bred Nida Fazli was a rebel. Though father Dua Dubaivi was also a poet, Fazli found

it difficult to relate to his traditional Daagh School of poetry. What helped him discover his poetic language was heartbreak! The story goes that as a college student Nida was infatuated with a classmate. But one day he read about her death in an accident on the college's notice board. He gradually took to writing. Incidentally, years later his song *Mere tere naam naye hain, yeh dard purana hai* (Sudhir Mishra's *Is Raat Ki Subah Nahin*, 1996) conveyed the eternal pain of separation.

The student of English literature, Fazli, reveled in the poetry of Bhakti poets like Kabir and Meera and Sufi poets like Amir Khusro and Abdul Rahim Khan-E- Khana. Fazli, who has written around 20 books both in Urdu (*Khoya Hua Sa Kuchh, Aankh Aur Khwab Ke Darmiyan*) and Hindi (*Humkadam, Safar Mein Dhoop To Hogi*), asserts that Hindi and Urdu are similar with the difference only in script.

RADICAL VOICE

Life took a detour for young Fazli when post the riots in Gwalior in the mid '60s, his father migrated to Pakistan. He, however, chose to remain in India. In his autobiography *Deewaron Ke Beech*, he mentioned that his father was swayed by the founder of Pakistan Mohammed Ali Jinnah while he was influenced by freedom fighter Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He came to Mumbai and wrote for publications like *Blitz* and *Dharmyug*. As a precocious



- ① Raj Babbar and Ranjeeta in *Aap Toh Aise Na The*
- ② Nanda and Girish Karnad in *Ahista Ahista*
- ③ Gauri Karnik and Lucky Ali in *Sur*
- ④ Sonali Bendre and Aamir Khan in *Sarfarosh*

NIDA FAZLI'S HIT SONGS

Kabhi kisi ko muqammal jahan nahin milta
(AHISTA AHISTA)

Tera hijr mera naseeb hai
(RAZIA SULTAN)

Tu iss tarah se meri zindagi mein shaamil hai
(AAP TOH AISE NA THE)

Hosh walon ko khabar kya
(SARFAROSH)

Apni marzi se kahan apne safar ke hum hain
(TV SERIAL SAILAAB)

Mirza Ghalib was the first to differentiate between 'aadmi' (man) and 'insaan' (human being). All life is a journey to bridge this chasm – Nida Fazli

youngster, he took on stalwarts like Kaifi Azmi, Sardar Jaffrey and Sahir Ludhinavi in his book *Mulaqatein* for what he believed was their 'fake' Marxism. Eventually, he understood the truth. He then wrote for Sardar Jaffery's magazine *Guftagu* for some time.

WRITING LYRICS

Kamal Amrohi had read his work and liked *Kabhi kisiko muqammil jahan nahin milta* (*Ahista Ahista*). He was on a lookout for poet to pitch in for *Razia Sultan* (1983) as Jan Nissar Akhtar, the original writer, had passed away. Fazli contributed two songs - *Tera hijr mera naseeb hai* and *Haryala banna aaya re* – for *Razia Sultan*. Fazli went on to write for Raj Kapoor (*Biwi O Biwi*) and Yash Chopra (*Nakhuda*). He also wrote *Joh vaada khudse kiya tha* for *Silsila*, sung by Pamela Chopra, but not included in the film.

His association with Mahesh Bhatt gave him the opportunity to write in *Chahat* and *Tamanna* in the '90s. But it was Tanuja Chandra's *Sur - The Melody Of Life* (2002), which won him mass popularity with tracks including *Aa bhi jaa* and *Kabhi shaam dhale* being chartbusters. He didn't limit myself to writing film lyrics. The Sahitya Academy Award winner continued to write columns for the BBC.

SUFI SENTIMENTS

Sensitive to the socio-political scenario in India he had stated, "Till date, we are polarised on the basis of religion. Politicians have made a business out of it."

A Mirza Ghalib aficionado he roots for the poet's humanism, "Ghalib was the first to differentiate between 'aadmi' (man) and 'insaan' (human being). All life is a journey to bridge this chasm!" Fazli invited the ire of the fundamentalists when he wrote, "Ghar se masjid hai bahut door, chalo yun kar le kisee rote huye bachche ko hansaaya jaaye," for Mahesh Bhatt's *Tamanna*. This Sufi slant was also evident in his lyrics for Govind Nihalani's *Dev* (2004) like *Piya ke rang rang deeni odhani*. "Sufism is emotional and tolerant Islam. *Ibadat* (worship) lies in appreciating a flower, in the *khanak* of my sister's bangles, in the memories of my mother... My God dwells in a child's laughter," he said. He believed restlessness was crucial to stay alive. "Aakhri saans tak beqaraar aadmi... (album *Sajda*). Without conflict, you develop indifference." In conflict, Nida Fazli, always remained... in his quest for a better world. ■



“I can flirt even with a plant”

FLIRT SHE WILL, BUT SHE'LL NEVER COMPROMISE HER ETHICS... SAYS FILMFARE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT WINNER, **MOUSHUMI CHATTERJEE**, IN A CHAT WITH **FARHANA FAROOK**

*I have seen it all,
I did it all,
I said it all,
But I can't remember
it all..."*

That's how our Lifetime Achievement Winner, Moushumi Chatterjee defines her four-decade-old journey. "I don't consider anyone bad. It's the situation that makes people do things. You may hurt someone unintentionally. But you must never humiliate anyone," says the actor who continues to throw up interesting performances. In 2014, she won the Filmfare

Award for Best Supporting Actress for the Bengali film Goynar Baksho and now the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award 2015. "I wish my father-in-law (the late musician/filmmaker Hemant Kumar) was present to see me receive this honour," she says. In the recent hit *Piku*, she impressed with her brazen candour on sexuality. What's more she was pitted against Amitabh Bachchan, her co-star in Basu Chatterjee's quaint film *Manzil* (1979), remembered for its RD Burman number

Rimjhim gire saawan. "Amitji possesses the same dedication. His sense of humour is intact," she says. "*Rimjhim gire* was shot over two days in natural light and rain... from Colaba, VT to Marine Drive. I remember my eyeliner getting smudged! We kept having coffee to keep ourselves warm," she reminisces.

CHILD BRIDE

The reluctant star of Tarun Mazumdar's *Ballika Badhu* (1965) never imagined that fiction would turn into

the truth of her life. "I did *Ballika Badhu* when I was in the fifth standard. I got married when I was in the tenth," recalls she. Young Indira (her real name) got engaged to 'guardian and neighbour' Hemant Kumar's son, Jayant

“There were people who said, 'I love you' and those who said, 'I want to marry you'. But they were attracted to me and not in love with me. I respect them. I even respect their spouses who went through a bad time then”

With the
Filmfare Lifetime
Achievement Award



“I've seen actresses go haywire. I committed a lot of mistakes too. But once I realised them, I took a U turn and never looked back...If you abuse life, life will abuse you back”

Mukherjee (Babu). “I fell in love with Babu. He was the first man I came in touch with outside my family. In my dowry, came a dog, a doll's house and a friend, my girl Friday,” she laughs.

The teen bride had already seen in Bengali films like *Parineeta*, *Anindita* and *Anand Ashram*. She came to Mumbai with husband Babu only to have film offers lined-up for her. Raj Khosla's *Kachche Dhaage* was her first film, though Shakti Samanta's *Anuraag*, where she played a visually-challenged girl released first in 1973.

The next year saw her team up with Amitabh Bachchan in the thriller *Benaam* and opposite Rajesh Khanna in *Humshakal*. Her most notable performance was that of a rape survivor in Manoj Kumar's *Roti Kapada Aur Makaan* (1974). “I was pregnant with my first child but Manojji took great care of me. I threw up with all the atta (flour) in my mouth. A duplicate blouse was placed on me, which was later flung aside for the scene.” She claims, “The song *Hai hai yeh majboori* was to be filmed on me. But I got pregnant. The phrase ‘do takiya’ in the song matches my character Tulsi's language not that of the sophisticated Zeenat Aman's in the film.” Her other successful films

were *Swarg Narak* and *Angoor* with Sanjeev Kumar. The hat-trick of hits *Maang Baro Sajna*, *Ghar Ek Mandir* and *Pet Pyaar Aur Paap* put her in the big league in 1984. Later, she graduated to doing character roles in *Ghayal*, *Ghar Parivaar* and *Udhaar Ki Zindagi*.

Ask Moushumi to analyse her appeal and she says self-effacingly, “I've a crooked nose. I'm slightly cock-eyed. Perhaps my smile, my laughter charmed. Also, I had a voluptuous figure. I was never skinny. Actually, sex-appeal lies in your face, your eyes. Having a great figure doesn't matter.” She recalls how the late director Raj Khosla summed her up. “He said, “Moushumi's childlike, not childish. She can be fun-loving like an eight-year-old and wise like a woman of 80.”

WILL BREAK, NOT BEND

In an industry, which has not been entirely kind to married actresses, Moushumi finds herself grateful. “Mahesh Bhatt once chided me for being ‘unprofessional’. He joked, ‘Every time your career is doing well, you get pregnant’. I replied, ‘My babies have added to my life’. You can be a top star, a celebrity or even a queen but ultimately you need a family, a home.”



A file picture



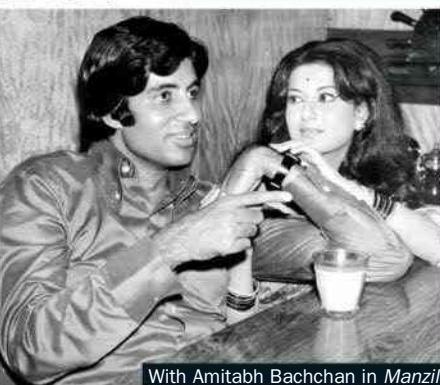
With Rishi Kapoor and director Raj Khosla



With Sanjeev Kumar in *Angoor*



With Shashi Kapoor in *Naina*



With Amitabh Bachchan in *Manzil*



With Shashi Kapoor and Nadira in *Swayamvar*

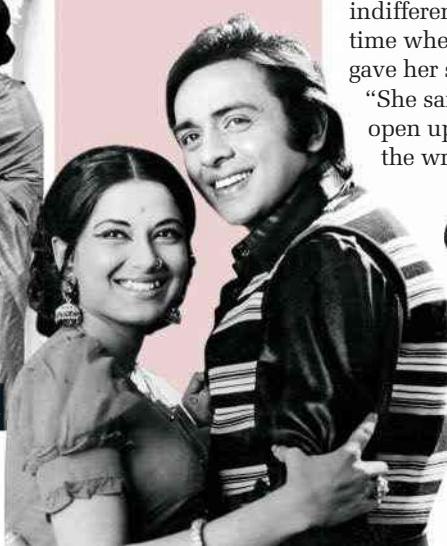
With Vinod Mehra in *Sabse Bada Rupaiya*



With Abhi Bhattacharya and Ashok Kumar in *Anuraag*

MOUSHUMI'S HIT SONGS

- ◆ Sun ri pawan - *Anuraag* (1973)
- ◆ Woh kya hai - *Anuraag* (1973)
- ◆ Mere bachpan tu jaa - *Kachche Dhaage* (1973)
- ◆ O hanseeni meri hanseeni - *Zehreela Insaan* (1974)
- ◆ Hum tum gum sum raat milan ki - *Humshakal* (1974)
- ◆ Vaada karo janam - *Sabse Bada Rupaiya* (1977)
- ◆ Megha re megha re - *Pyaasa Sawan* (1981)



What she does admit to is her ‘will break but not bend’ dictum, which became the reason of her walking out of big projects. “I was not the ambitious kind, who wanted work by hook or crook. I did films on my own terms. I even shot for some big banner films but left them after a few days because my ethics didn’t allow me to continue. I didn’t compromise my *sanskars*. They thought I was stubborn and crazy.”

Rumours of being ‘uncooperative’ plagued her career. “Some top heroes could not take my behaviour. They’d say, ‘You prefer to talk to the spot boy rather than have a cup of coffee with me. Do you think you’re Vyjayanthimala? I’d say, ‘No, I believe I’m Cleopatra’. Some, noticing my stance, would turn respectful, some indifferent.” She recalls the time when a senior actress gave her some ‘advice’.

“She said, ‘Why don’t you open up? You rub them the wrong way. What’s

the harm in having dinner with them on outdoors?’”

She holds her heroes Vinod Khanna, Rishi Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Sanjeev Kumar and Dharmendra in high regard. “Once Dharamji happened to see me at a particular party. He said, ‘Why have you come here? Go home right now!’ Rishi was helpful when I was pregnant and shooting for *Zehreela Insaan*. While Sanjeev Kumar loved to relax at my house, enjoying non-vegetarian food and watching films.”

MY HOME, MY WORLD

While showbiz wanted more of her, all she wanted was to rush back home. “I could switch from being Moushumi to Indu very easily. The minute pack-up was announced I wanted to run home to my husband. Even after Payal was born, I’d want to see Babu first.” In fact, the foundation of their bond, she says, was formed in those early years.

“A senior actress ‘advised’ me saying, ‘Why don’t you open up? You rub the heroes the wrong way. What’s the harm in having dinner with them?’”



With daughter Payal



With her doll

“Mahesh Bhatt joked, ‘Every time your career is doing well, you get pregnant’. I replied, ‘You may be a star, even a queen but ultimately you need a family’”

She was a minor when her first daughter Payal was born. “My gynaecologist told me ‘a kid is having a kid’. When Payal was born, I didn’t have patience. She’d break my toys; I’d want to break hers.” She had Megha at 24 and didn’t work for two years as she was a weak child. “But the moment I thought of returning, I got four offers including *Watan Ke Rakhwale*, *Aag Hi Aag* and *Ghayal*,” says she.

Her ingenuousness remained intact even after motherhood and that’s why perhaps Dharmendra signed her for his production *Ghayal*. “I wasn’t interested. I suggested other heroines. But he said, ‘Kudiye, none

can match your innocence. You can make the audience *ghayal* with your pain.’”

She owes the liberty she enjoyed to her husband. “Babu was well off. He wasn’t living off me. He trusted me. My life has been an open book. Yes, he was possessive about certain things. Like once when I wore a sleeveless blouse, he didn’t like it. He said, ‘Have you forgotten to wear a blouse?’” she laughs.

LINK-UPS & LIES

Though she was a married actress, rumours of romantic liaisons didn’t spare her. She was linked to various heroes including the late Vinod Mehra and Farooque Sheikh and distributor Ramesh Sippy. With Vinod Mehra she did

With
husband
Jayant
Mukherjee



around 10 films including *Anuraag*, *Us-Paar*, *Raftaar*, *Umar Qaid* and *Zindagi* and that set the grapevine buzzing. “Vinod and Babu were close friends. We lived in the same building. So we often went out together. That gave rise to rumours.” She doesn’t deny her outgoing disposition. “I am a flirt. I can flirt even with a plant, with an animal. In fact, Shabana Azmi once said, ‘Shashi Kapoor and you can flirt with anyone from six to 60,’ she titters. But she’s aware of the perils of a friendly disposition. “The way I show my warmth is misconstrued. Babu once told me, ‘You’re a heroine. People view you differently. Be careful’. But he also jokes that even on my death bed I will flirt with the doctor.”

On a serious note she explains, “I never reacted to rumours. Those close to me knew, where I was and with whom. My husband was with me. Yes, I committed mistakes.” She reflects, “I realised Moushumi Chatterjee had many admirers. There

were people who said, ‘I love you’ and even those who said, ‘I want to marry you’. I couldn’t push them away or be rude. I gave them enough time and also to myself to understand that they were attracted to me and not in love with me. I respect them. I even respect their spouses who also went through a bad time.”

She’s still a ‘romantic’ but her definition of love has changed. “Love is an illusion. It’s at best attraction and attachment. Gradually, you move on to other things, your emotions are channelised into your children, your work...”

GOLDEN TIME

Glamour is short-lived and what lasts is the halo of contentment. “I’ve seen actresses go haywire. I committed a lot of mistakes too. But once I realised them, I took a U turn and never looked back. Your lifestyle is important. If you abuse life, life will abuse you back. Actresses turn lonely because they don’t listen to the voice within.” She insists on being spiritual. “I’m a Hindu but I perform *namaz*. I visit the church. You can reach God by touching human beings. You come alone and go alone. I take pleasure in simple things, like cooking and being with my children. And of course getting into arguments with husband Jayant. “Babu merely listens, unless I provoke him. We share a great sense of humour. Like when I say, ‘*Gala dukh raha hai* (my throat is hurting)’, he shoots back, ‘*Daba doon* (shall I press it)?’” ■

your say

reader's reviews, box-office, celebrity column & more

INSTA LIKE Saree story

Here's how our leading ladies showed off their nine yards on Instagram

SOUTH STYLE

Attending friend Asin's wedding reception, Jacqueline Fernandez took the traditional white-and-gold saree and added her own charm to it. And we love her playful stance as she gears up for the evening.



PATRIOTIC FERVOUR

Flaunting a custom-made saree by Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla, Sonam Kapoor went that extra mile to look her best for a flag hoisting function. We love it.



PRETTY IN PINK

Shilpa Shetty looked a sight for sore eyes on a wintry day as she donned a shaded saree for an event in Lucknow. And it was all about grace unparalleled.



COLOUR ME RED

Gearing up for a friend's engagement, Deepika Padukone gave a contemporary twist to her nine yards and proved that the saree is a thing of beauty... forever.



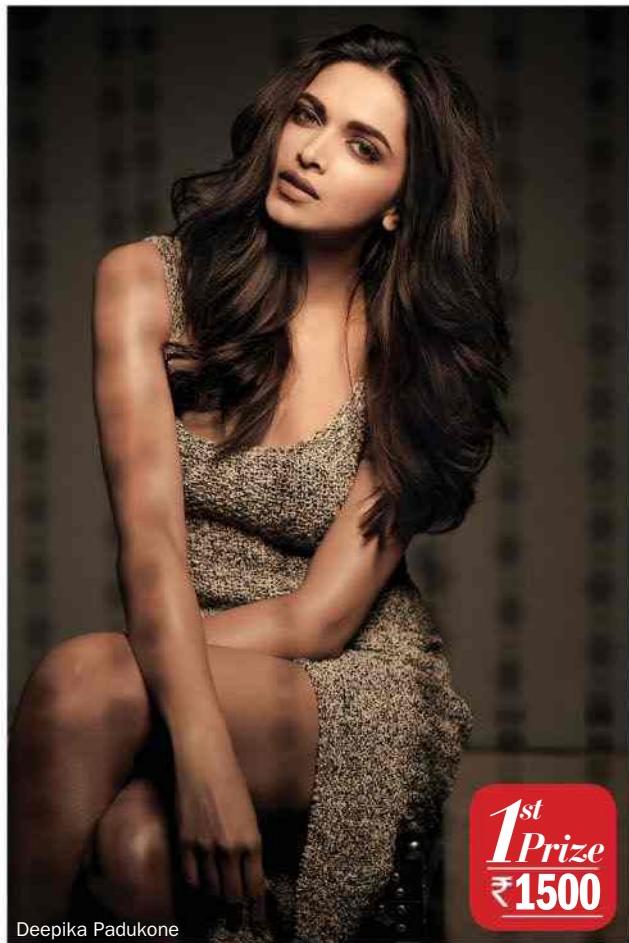
Readers send in their feedback pg 98

Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 104



IN THE MAIL

READERS WRITE AND BITE BACK... WITH LOVE AND AFFECTION



Deepika Padukone

↑ IT'S A BEAUTIFUL LIFE

The January 27 issue was an amazing read, especially the engaging cover story with the gorgeous Deepika Padukone. Post *Piku*, *Tamasha* and *Bajirao Mastani*, she's riding the crest of commercial success and critical acclaim. Her interview (*Hail the Queen*) was candid. It was a refreshing change to read about her trials, heartbreak

and success. Her journey of self-discovery as an actor and as a person is amazing. From whirlwind romances, to box-office success and failure and the deep, dark side of depression, Deepika has indeed seen it all and emerged victorious. She is unquestionably a survivor in the cut-throat Hindi film industry.

Bhavya Jain, Ranchi

**2nd Prize
₹1000**

↓ MEET THE KIWIS

Reading
Sidharth
Malhotra's

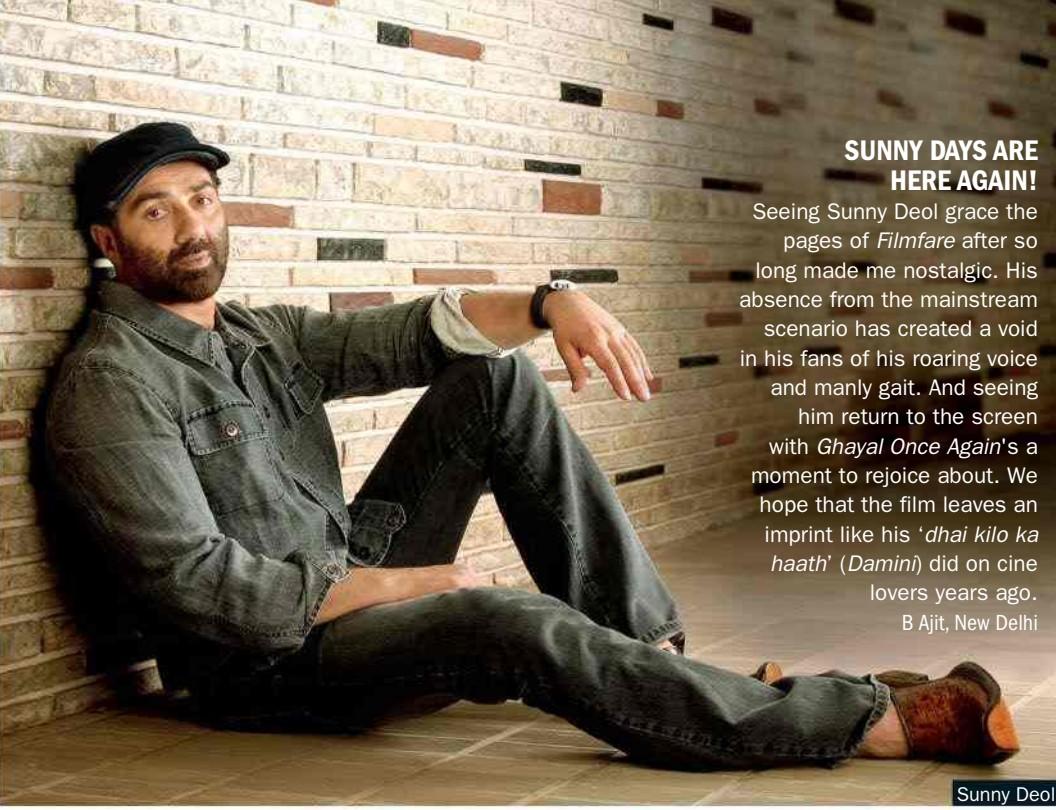
exquisite and detailed travel diary about the picturesque New Zealand (*Wellington Muse*, January 27) was enjoyable. Whether he was rejuvenating in the pool, cooking and eating delicious meals or trying out the various popular adventure sports in the country, he seemed to have the time of his life. He also gave us some handy travel tips in the process.

But the best part was that not only did we get to see the country through fresh eyes, it also instilled a sense of pride in us that an Indian actor has been chosen to be the Brand Ambassador of New Zealand's tourism industry. He made a happy marriage of work and leisure. Seeing him participate in local customs and playing a fanboy on seeing *The Lord Of The Rings* film franchise weapons and costumes was amazing. We witnessed the exotic locales that we'd have never seen before.

Sonia Talwar, New Delhi



Sidharth Malhotra



SUNNY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN!

Seeing Sunny Deol grace the pages of *Filmfare* after so long made me nostalgic. His absence from the mainstream scenario has created a void in his fans of his roaring voice and manly gait. And seeing him return to the screen with *Ghayal Once Again's* a moment to rejoice about. We hope that the film leaves an imprint like his 'dhai kilo ka haath' (*Damini*) did on cine lovers years ago.

B Ajit, New Delhi

Sunny Deol

Just one Point



Ranveer Singh

Ranveer Singh deserves every bit of the success he has received with *Bajirao Mastani*, thanks to his hard work and his ability to surrender to director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's vision.

Pooja Kumar, Bangalore



Aanand L Rai

↑ THE HUMBLE STORYTELLER

The interview with Aanand L Rai (*Anand Rai Returns*, January 27) gave us a deeper look into the man behind some of the popular films of the last few years, *Tanu Weds Manu*. *Tanu*

Weds Manu Returns and *Raanjhanaa*. His humility, despite his box-office success, was impressive. Seeing his intent to tell stories without ego restores the belief that content is and will always be king.

Ateev Suri, Mumbai

↓ BRING BACK THE MELODY

Your Last Word *Kahan Gaya Woh Music* (January 27) pointed out what's missing in film music. The music today is catchy, but there hasn't been an album in recent years that has left a lasting impression on the audience.

Karan Malik, Hyderabad



Turni Chakrabarti,

Darjeeling

Looking at the line-up of superstar films in 2016, which includes Hrithik Roshan's *Mohenjo Daro*, Shah Rukh Khan's *Fan* and *Raees*, Salman Khan's *Sultan* and Aamir Khan's *Dangal*, Hindi films are definitely going to create more fireworks at the box office than ever before.

RC Parsa, Secunderabad

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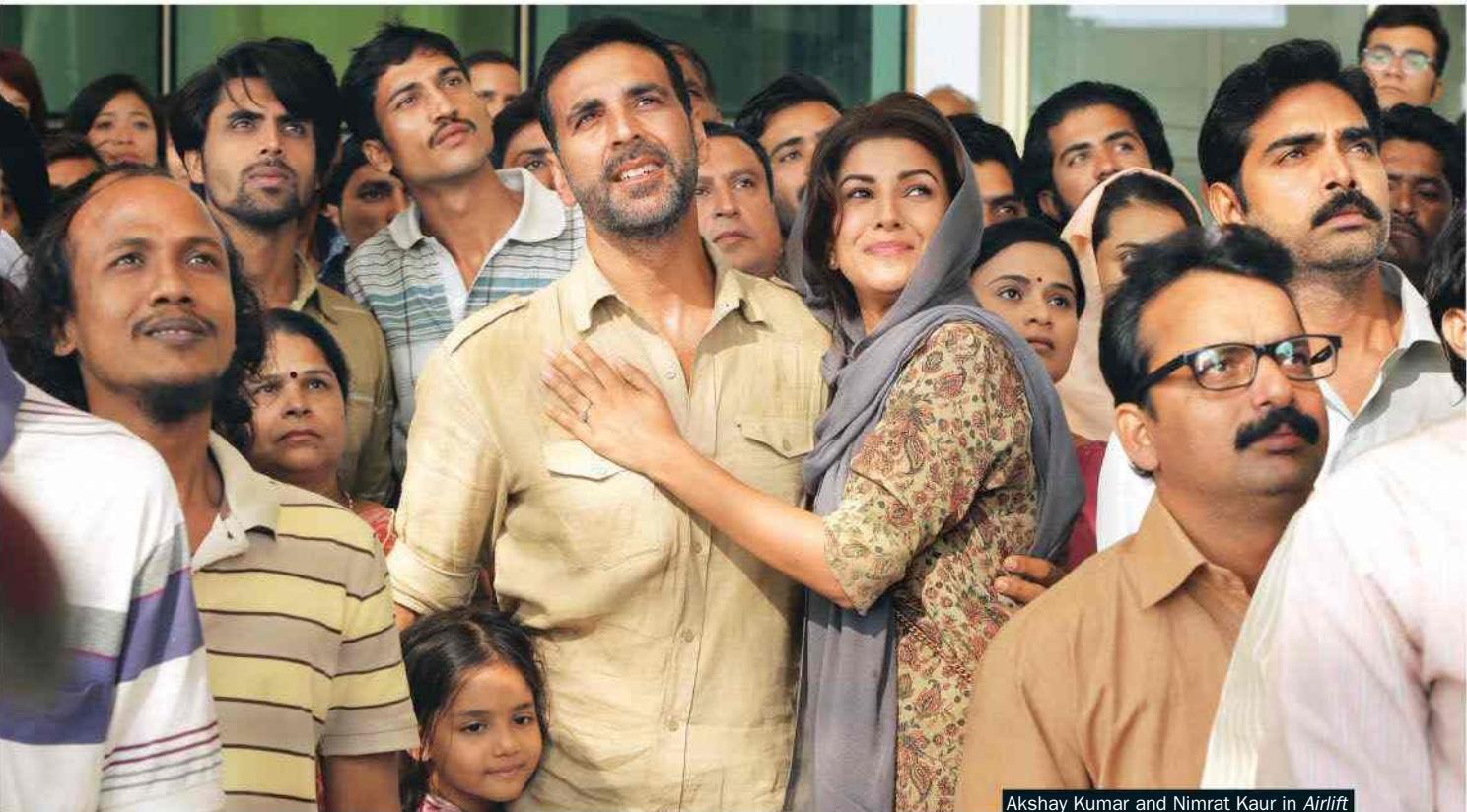
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BLOW HOT BLOW KOOL

While *Airlift* has taken a flight at the box-office, *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3* refused to take off



Akshay Kumar and Nimrat Kaur in *Airlift*



AIRLIFT SOUL-LIFTING EXPERIENCE

There are three things about *Airlift*, which make the movie enthralling. The first being the story. Based on the 'largest civilian operation' in the world when Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait in 1990, this event became a forgotten story until director Raja Krishna Menon brought it back to life with such simple storytelling. The second thing being Akshay Kumar. It's the actor's finest performance. Here, he strays from his *Khiladi* image and makes us appreciate his acting finesse. Nimrat Kaur is a terrific actress and she's surely here to stay. The final winning point is the feelings that *Airlift* evokes in you. One can experience absolute patriotism and national pride. Full marks to the director for leaving such an impact!

Ujjwala S, Mumbai

SENSIBLE AND SINCERE

Akshay Kumar is spectacular in *Airlift*. I could relate to the film because my uncle was one of the Indians who endured the situation during the evacuation of Kuwait in 1990. So I watched it with piqued interest. I had heard the story from my uncle but watching it on the big screen was horrifying. The team of *Airlift* has done a great job.

Poonam Bansal, Gurgaon.

AKSHAY STEALS THE SHOW

Director Raj Krishna Menon has done a brilliant job with *Airlift*. Every character, big or small, is etched with rare beauty. Purab Kohli, Kumud Mishra, Prakash Belawadi and Feryna Wazhier have done a commendable job. Nimrat Kaur too is impressive. And of course, Akshay Kumar breathes life into his character as Rajiv Katiyal with such passion and sincerity. One wonders why directors don't look beyond his gummy smile, goofy expressions and physique.

Dr K Karthik Rao, Chennai.

TWIVIEWS

Fans and readers tweet their mini reviews to @filmfare

@Prabhjyot1:

Airlift is a hearttouching movie. Akshay Kumar is brilliant.

@Bhukhan1000:

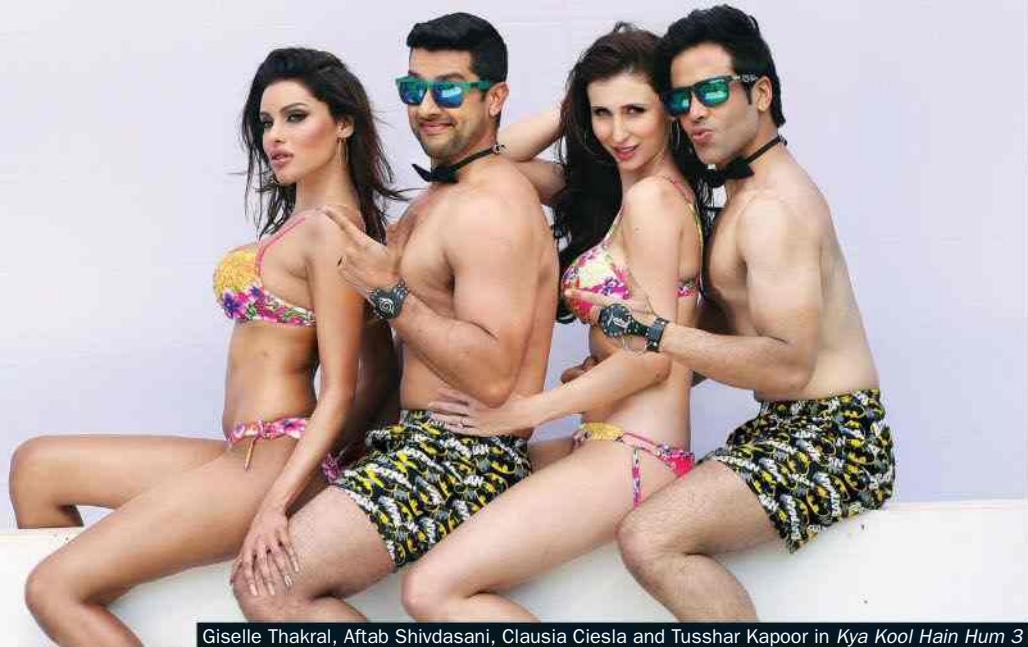
Too early to say but yes, *Airlift* is the best film of 2016. Akshay Kumar's performance is award winning.

@smaricub:

Loved *Airlift*. *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3* is avoidable.

@mohit28saxena:

Airlift is an awesome film. Watch it for Akshay Kumar, he's too good. *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3* is a blunder.



Giselle Thakral, Aftab Shivdasani, Clasiusa Ciesla and Tusshar Kapoor in *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3*

KYA KOOL HAIN HUM 3

NEITHER COOL NOR HOT

Kya Kool Hain Hum 3 (KKHH3) falls absolutely flat. The much anticipated sex comedy, based in Thailand is a crude and failed extension of the *Comedy Of Errors*. Tusshar Kapoor and Aftab Shivdasani are totally out-of-sync with their characters. Shakti Kapoor has nothing new to offer and Krushna Abhishek just repeats what he does on the small screen in his comedy show. The songs too are unnecessary. Overall *KKHH3* is a senseless and stupid attempt.

Kabir, New Delhi

A PORN-CON FILM

Kya Kool Hain Hum 3 promises to be India's first porn-com film but it's nowhere close to Hollywood's *American Pie* franchise. Aftab Shivdasani and Tusshar Kapoor fail miserably. The double meaning jokes are so off colour that you'd rather read the non-vegetarian joke book. The girls in the film – Mandana Karimi, Giselle Thakral and Clasiusa Ciesla - are seen at their skimpiest best. And what's more, the surprise element is *Kaliyon ka chaman* sensation, Meghna Naidu in the film. Overall the film is not worth for even cheap sleaze thrills.

Akshita Singh, Pune

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TWIVIEWS

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@Riyaverma9:

Hands down *Airlift* is a better film than *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3*. Akshay Kumar is remarkable.

@riken79:

Watching *Airlift* makes one proud of being an Indian. Kudos to Akshay Kumar and Nimrat Kaur.

@ShivanjR7:

Airlift is a must-watch.

@pramoditagi:

Airlift made India proud. Hats off to Akshay Kumar. *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3* is bad.

@RSiddique21:

Kya Kool Hain Hum 3 is a waste of money. But *Airlift* saves the day. It's mind-blowing.

@Xuzanfabiokeith

The cheapest movie ever is *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3*. It's dull, boring and a sex comedy with an annoying storyline.

@smariclus:

Loved *Airlift*. *Kya Kool Hain Hum 3* is avoidable.

ACTION REPLAY

Ghayal Once Again, Sunny Deol's comeback vehicle, was viewed with much skepticism but the star, who is nearly 60, played it smart by hiring Hollywood action choreographers to up the ante. Result: he had the masses hooked to this international brand of action. *Mastizaade*, the sex comedy involving Sunny Leone, had better footfalls than the similar themed *Kya Kool Hai Hum 3. Sala Khadoos*, about the malaise infested Indian sport bodies, made headway after good word-of-mouth publicity.



MASTIZADE

FIRST WEEK'S COLLECTION ₹ 28.74cr

DIRECTOR: Milap Zaveri

CAST: Sunny Leone, Tusshar Kapoor, Vir Das

RELEASE DATE: January 29, 2016

RAPID REVIEW: A comedy revolving Sunny Leone in a double role

VIEWER'S VERDICT:

"Sunny Leone is the only reason I watched the film."

– Mandar Gupte, 30, businessman



SAALA KHADOOS

FIRST WEEK'S COLLECTION ₹ 12.63cr

DIRECTOR: Sudha Kongara

CAST: R Madhavan, Ritika Singh

RELEASE DATE: January 29, 2016

RAPID REVIEW: A hard-hitting film revolving around boxing at the national level.

VIEWER'S VERDICT:

"Riveting performances by both Madhavan and newbie Ritika Singh."

– Neha Saraf, 32, human resources manager



GHAYAL ONCE AGAIN

FIRST WEEKEND COLLECTION ₹ 23.00cr

DIRECTOR: Sunny Deol

CAST: Sunny Deol, Om Puri, Soha Ali Khan

RELEASE DATE: February 5, 2016

RAPID REVIEW: Sunny Deol brings back his *dhai kilo ka haath* into action again.

VIEWER'S VERDICT:

"The action is truly world class."

– Jayesh Shemlani, 32, client servicing



In 140 characters...

PRESENTING THE MOST INTERESTING TWEETS OF THE FORTNIGHT GONE BY



We're more than familiar with John Abraham's love for fitness and working out in the gym. And it's commendable how the actor trains with such intensity after an 18-hour long shoot and despite multiple injuries. Wow!



@TheJohnAbraham: "18 hours of shoot ... Then train Weakness fails!!!!"



@sonakshisinha: "Well look who's back!"

After a 10-day hiatus from Twitter, Sonakshi Sinha got back to the micro blogging site with a goofy selfie. We're glad she didn't deprive her fans of her updates for too long.



@ayushmannk: "People who put pineapple on pizza are close cousins of people who put dry fruit in samosa."

Ayushmann Khurrana clearly has his preferences sorted when it comes to food. And by the looks of it, the actor doesn't quite enjoy the mix of savoury and sweet.



@mrsfunnybones: "Now I wonder if I hailed this rickshaw would I get a free ride :)"

The effortlessly funny Twinkle Khanna's no stranger to humour. But this time she decided to poke some fun at herself as she spotted an autorickshaw with her name on it. She sparked off quite the conversation on Twitter, which revolved around jokes about her name. Teehee!



Shatrughan Sinha's **Rapid fire**

Why are politicians so keen in heading sports organisations?

Vijay Aggarwal, Kurukshetra

Most politicians have nothing better to do; they prefer to go for head-on collisions to gain some cheap publicity and a dash of limited power.

When should one choose to remain 'Khamosh'?

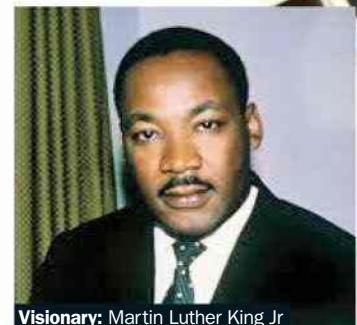
Arshad Hussain, Patna

Only and when you're caught red handed...

Which recent advertisement has made the greatest impact on you as a consumer? Why?

Laj Khemlani, Pune

It's not very recent but the 'What an idea Sirji' series from Idea as well as 'Share the load' ad from Ariel, really made an impact. The campaign rightly states it's not only a woman's job to do the laundry. She's worth much more than that. It has a great social message. It's a good ad creatively at the same time.



Visionary: Martin Luther King Jr

Which national/international politician till date has left the greatest impact on you and how?

Nirmala Khemlani, Pune

The most revered and respectable people's politician, the late JP Narayan, has been the impactful politician behind my joining politics. I also have a great admiration for the late and great Martin Luther King Jr and his Civil Rights Movement.

Why can't every man become a gentleman?

J P Singh Kaka, Ahmedabad

Those who can't, don't deserve women kind.

Where would India's economy be in 10 years?

G. Bharath Reddy, Vishakapatnam

**My girlfriend has blocked me on Facebook.
Will you call it an electronic divorce?**

J P Singh Kaka, Ahmedabad

Doesn't matter what you call it, electronic, platonic, satanic - the 'face' of the matter is you must be troubling her, you have been booked, blocked and kicked, virtually and literally.



Hit star: Akshay Kumar

Under the leadership of our dashing and dynamic hero Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I hope, wish and pray to see India's golden period - not only for the general public but even for the always ready-to-strike opposition. By the way, I'm not being poetic...

Can one know about someone's profession through face reading?

Mubashir Khan, Hyderabad?

Face trading or base reading? We would like to be enlightened, tell us more about it.

Did you like the recent Akshay Kumar release *Airlift*?

Laj Khemlani, Pune

After our national hero, Akshay Kumar's, special offering *Special 26*, *Airlift* seems to be the most loved and appreciated film. It's a hit at the box-office too. Everyone seems to have liked it, except our Ministry Of External Affairs.

(Feature co-ordinated by
DEVESH SHARMA)

Please note: The column doesn't reflect Shatrughan Sinha's political or personal views. His answers are given in jest and humour.

1st Prize

Should celebrities endorse paan masala?

Subedar Ramkumar, via email

Never! Though it's a moral choice. We have to be extra careful as our choices impact and influence people at large. *Paan masala* or for that matter any tobacco product is harmful to health. One must think twice. Remember, tobacco kills. There is a saying, "Those who smoke or chew any form of tobacco don't grow old, they die young." Say no to tobacco, say no to drugs.

2nd Prize

What does a man hunt for throughout his life but rarely finds?

Dr Harsh Kumar, Ranchi

Besides peace and sleep, the perfect woman. Actually, it's the man who deserves to be blamed. Because whenever he finds a great woman; he wants another one and thus is always on the hunt. It's a tragedy men have brought upon themselves.

Win!
CASH PRIZES

1st prize

₹3000

2nd prize

₹2000

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YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE FORWARDED TO: Shatrughan Sinha, who insists his answers do not reflect his political and social views.

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Splitsville

The film industry today is agog with the news of long-time couples parting ways. The tabloids scream of a new separation each day and it's beginning to seem like an epidemic. At first we heard of Hrithik Roshan parting ways with wife Sussanne. Now, has come the news that Farhan Akhtar and Adhuna have separated. It's rumoured that power couple Malaika Arora Khan and Arbaaz are going through some trouble as well.

There were reports that Pulkit Samrat had left his wife Shweta Rohira though the duo seems to have patched up now. Or so the rumours suggest. Among non-married couples, news of Ranbir Kapoor — Katrina Kaif parting ways has come to the fore and now we hear of Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma calling it quits as well.

All this is quite disheartening, to say the least. We think of them as golden couples having the world at their feet. Their alleged partings serve a severe blow to masses fed on the 'happily ever after' myth of escapist cinema. The truth is that even in the real world, relationships are getting increasingly dysfunctional. A forever relationship isn't looked upon as an ideal anymore by today's generation. Double income couples don't need the financial security of traditional relationships.

Then, thanks to the profound use of Smartphones, emotional bonding



▲ Katrina Kaif and Ranbir Kapoor



▲ Adhuna and Farhan Akhtar



▲ Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma

is just a click away. You don't even have to meet up in real time anymore. And apps like Tinder have ensured casual hookups without any cloak-and-dagger effort on part of both parties. And that's perhaps exactly what this generation wants. A recent hack of a popular dating site showed that married men and women were actively looking for action outside the marital bed. So why are we even surprised when we hear of celebrity hookups or breakups? Why are these given so much print space? Why are they discussed with rabid glee on social media platforms?

The harsh truth is that divorce or separation does take an enormous emotional toll. It's the children, if any, who are most affected, even if it's amicable and especially when a long custody battles take place. It's a private, sordid affair between two individuals and should be treated that way. Yes, it becomes news because public figures are involved but that doesn't mean that every little morsel of the scenario should become fodder for the masses.

Celebs should also learn not to wash their dirty linen in public and not fight battles through the media. Egos shouldn't come into play at all nor should one aim to cash in on the publicity. Treat yourself, your erstwhile partner and the shreds of your relationship with the dignity it deserves... ■

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